



No. 17

TIM HOLT

COWBOY STAR OF THE MOVIES



10¢

in this issue
**2 thrilling tales of
THE GHOST RIDER!**
Read "The Hooks of Horror!"

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TIM HOLT'S WESTERN ALBUM

CAUGHT in the murderous gunfire that rocks the range when a crooked gambler turns rustler boss to collect a debt, young Robert Clarke receives aid from Tim, Chito, and Jacqueline White.

GRIPPING words must be issuing from Tim's mouth, judging by the intent look on the gambler's hard face. Then, too, there's the grip of Tim's hands!

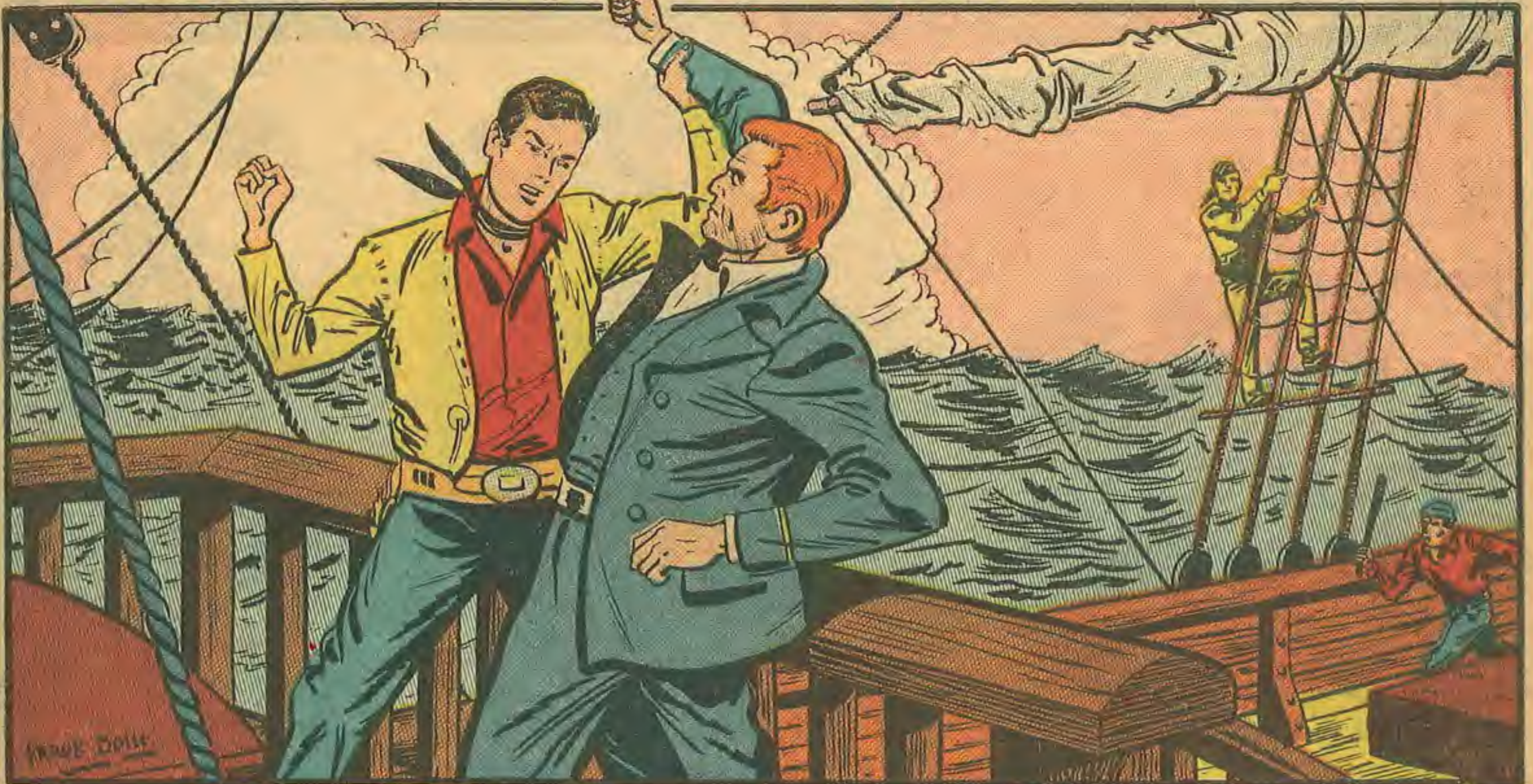


TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT

MUTINY ON THE HIGH SEAS! FISTS AND BELAYING PINS! GUNS THAT AIM TO KILL! DESPERATE MEN WHO STOP AT NOTHING! AND AS HIS CREW REBELS UNDER HIS IRON HEEL, CAPTAIN "ROCKY SHORES" ROARS AND BULLIES AND THREATENS—ONLY TO FIND TIM HOLT LETTING GO THE ANCHOR RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SEA—GOING SAGA OF—

"THE COWBOY AND THE CLIPPER!"



THE FOREDECK OF THE YANKEE CLIPPER, VERMONT, SWARMS WITH MEN MADE DESPERATE BY PANIC...

WE'LL NOT GO INTO THAT OCEAN...NOT WITH THE STORM THAT'S COMIN' UP ON THE HORIZON!

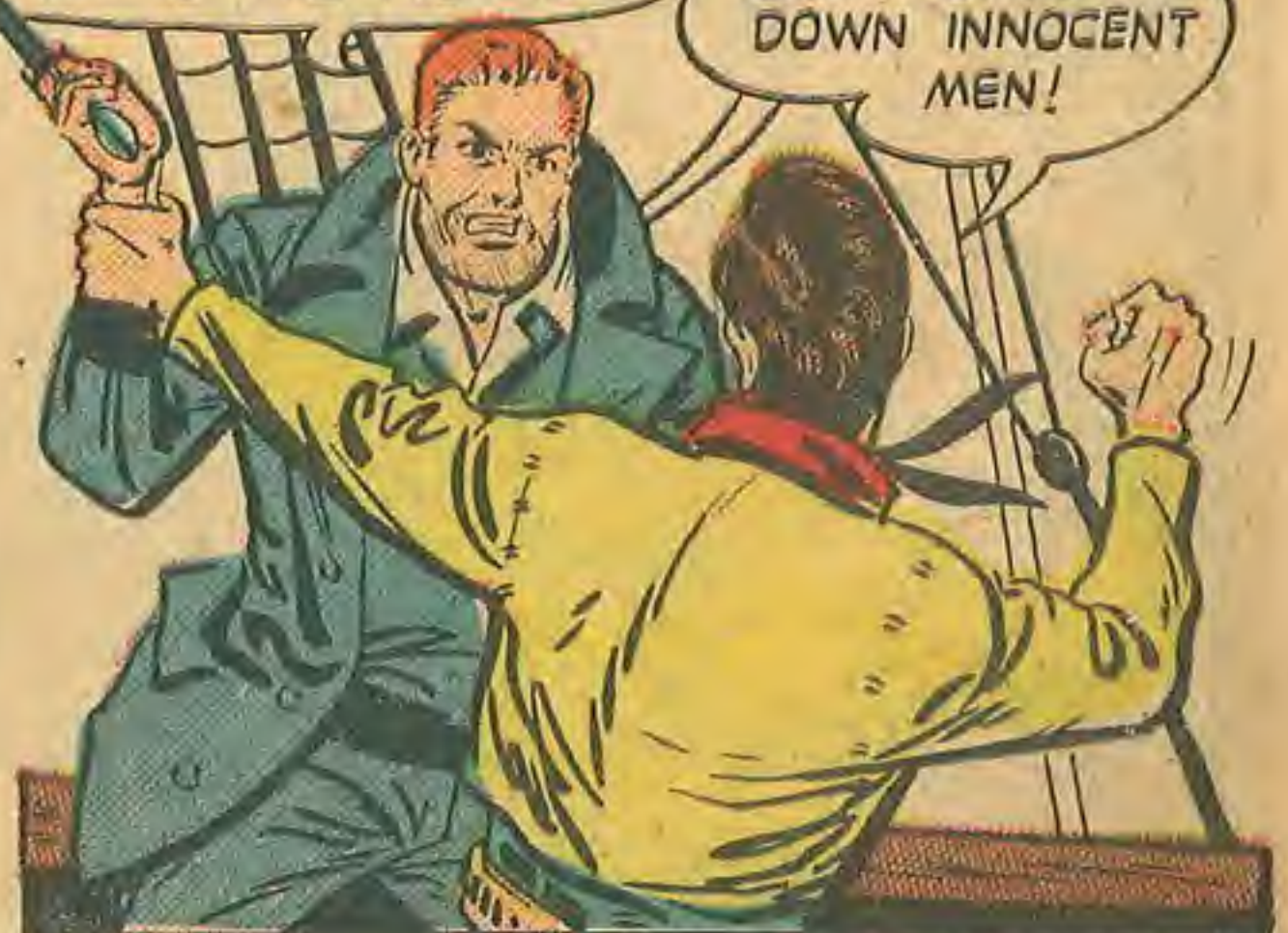
WE NEED REPAIRS—FRESH FRUIT TO PREVENT SCURVY—CLEAN WATER!



ON THE CAPTAIN'S BRIDGE—FIGHTING TO WREST THE LOADED COLT FROM THE CAPTAIN'S HAIRY HAND—IS TIM HOLT!

AVAST, YE MUSCLE-HEADED COW-TENDER! I'LL FLING YE TO THE FISHES!

NO GUNS, CAPTAIN! YOU CAN'T SHOOT DOWN INNOCENT MEN!



TIM HOLT

WITH A BERSERK HEAVE, THE MADDENED CAPTAIN WHIPS TIM FROM HIM, AND WHIRLS WITH A HOARSE BELLOW OF TRIUMPH!

HALT, YE CHICKEN-LIVERED SONS O' LANDLUBBERS! I SHOOT THE NEXT GALLEY-SLAVE THAT TAKES A STEP FORWARD!



WE DON'T GO TO OUR DEATHS IN THAT STORM THAT'S BREWIN'!

SHOOT! YOU'LL GET ONLY A COUPLE OF US!



THUMBING HIS COLT PEACEMAKERS, TIM LEAPS FORWARD. ONE SHOT BLASTS THE CAPTAIN'S GUN FROM HIS NERVELESS FINGERS! ANOTHER, AND THEN ANOTHER, CUTS THE RIGGING SO THAT IT FALLS — TO DROP LIKE A GIGANTIC NET OVER THE RAGE-MADDENED SAILORS, ON THE DECK!



SAY YOUR PIECE, CAPTAIN SHORES! TELL YOUR MEN YOU WON'T TAKE THEM INTO THAT STORM! EVEN I KNOW THE MEN NEED FRESH FOOD AND WATER AFTER THEIR LONG TRIP!

HOLT—WHEN I GET YOU WITHOUT THEM GUNS...! ALL RIGHT, I'LL TELL 'EM!



YOU ARE STOP THEE MUTINEE, BUT YOU STEEL MAKING BAD ENEMY EEN THAT CAPTAIN!

CAN'T HELP THAT, CHITO. IT WAS MORE IMPORTANT TO SAVE THOSE SAILOR'S LIVES. BESIDES, WE'LL BE AT THE END OF OUR JOURNEY, SHORTLY. THINK YOUR FOLKS WILL KNOW YOU?



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



EEES MAYBE YOU ARE MEEES LASSO PRACTICE, NO ?

NO! I'M GOING BELOW DECKS — IN A WAY THAT CAPTAIN SHORES WON'T NOTICE...

MOVING DOWN THE SIDE OF THE SWIFTLY TRAVELLING CLIPPER SHIP, TIM MANOEUVERS HIMSELF WITHIN HEARING DISTANCE OF THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN...

WHEN HE COMES BELOW DECKS, I'LL BE HERE IN CASE HE TALKS OVER HIS PLANS...



MINUTES LATER, THE CABIN DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES. THEN—

WE'LL CLEAR CATLIN ISLAND BEFORE EIGHT BELLS! WE'LL GO OVERSIDE IN A DORY, WITH A COUPLE OF PICKED BOYS.

I GET IT! A QUICK RAID ON THE HACIENDA — IN CASE THE SENORITA HAS CHANGED HER MIND ABOUT ELOPIN' WITH YOU!



SHE SAID SHE'D HAVE A BAG OF HER FAMILY JEWELS. EVEN IF SHE DOESN'T, SHE'S A PRIZE WORTH CATCHING—ESPECIALLY SINCE HER FOLKS ARE PLENTY WEALTHY!



TWO NIGHTS LATER, AS THE ANCHOR CHAINS SLIP THROUGH THE HAWSEPIPE—

SHORES LEFT IN THE DORY! THIS IS OUR CHANCE!

THEE WATER SHE EES LOOK FOR BE ICE COLD! **BRR---!**



STROKING SWIFTLY THROUGH THE COLD WATER, TIM AND CHITO CLAMBER ASHORE...

THEY AREN'T FAR AHEAD. WE CAN FOLLOW THEM BY THE LANTERNS THEY'RE CARRYING.



SOME TIME LATER, AT THE HACIENDA, A FEW MILES INLAND...

EASY, ALL! BELAY THAT GAB, MATES! NO NEED TO ALARM THE GUARDS. I'LL MAKE A DASH IN — GET THE GAL AND WE'LL SLIP OUT WITHOUT ROUSIN' ANYONE...



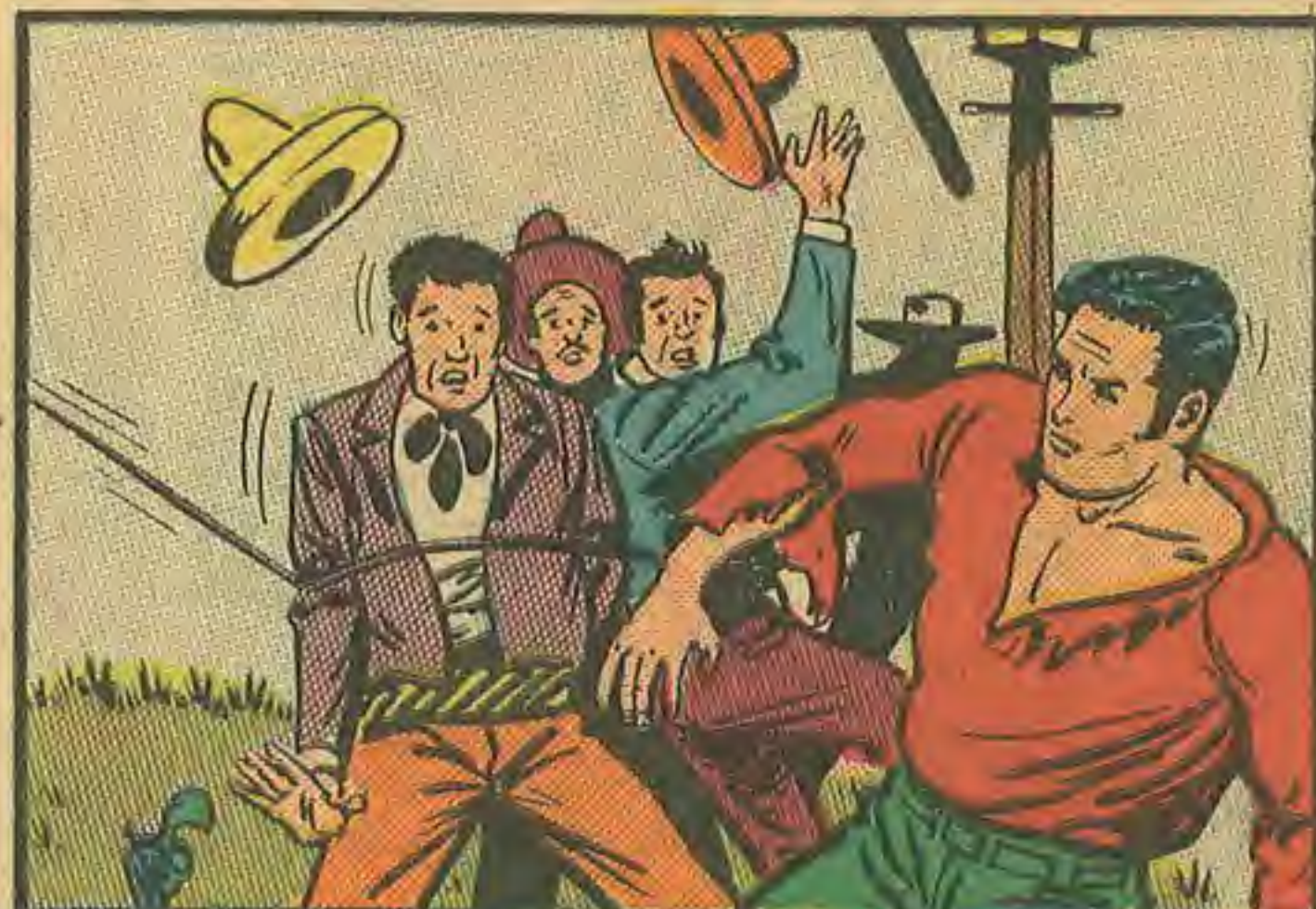
TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



LIKE A
LIVING THING,
TIM'S LARIAT
SWINGS
DOWN AND
CLOSES ON
THE GUARDS—



TIM HOLT

AND THEN TIM'S DESPERATE FINGERS CLOSE ON A SUBMERGED ROPE! HE PULLS CHITO TOWARD HIM...

CHITO! A DRAGGING LIFT! MUST HAVE BROKEN OFF THE MAST! HANG ON!

I AM FOR TRY HANGING ON...



HAND OVER HAND, INCH BY INCH, TIM CRAWLS ALONG THE WET LIFT, DRAGGING CHITO WITH HIM. THE TUG OF THE SURGING CLIPPER ALMOST RIPS HIS ARMS FROM HIS SOCKETS...

CHITO—TAKE THE ROPE! YOU HAVE TO HELP! I'M ABOUT DONE IN!

MY ARMS SHE FEEL LIKE LEAD WEIGHTS. BUT I TRY...



HUH! CAPTAIN SHORES AND HIS RELUCTANT FIANCEE...!



MARRY YOU? I'D RATHER DIE! AND I WILL DIE—IF YOU DON'T GET OUT—AND LEAVE ME ALONE!

HAVE IT YOUR OWN WAY—DARLING! BUT I'LL BE BACK—AND WE'LL BE MARRIED BEFORE THIS JOURNEY'S DONE WITH!



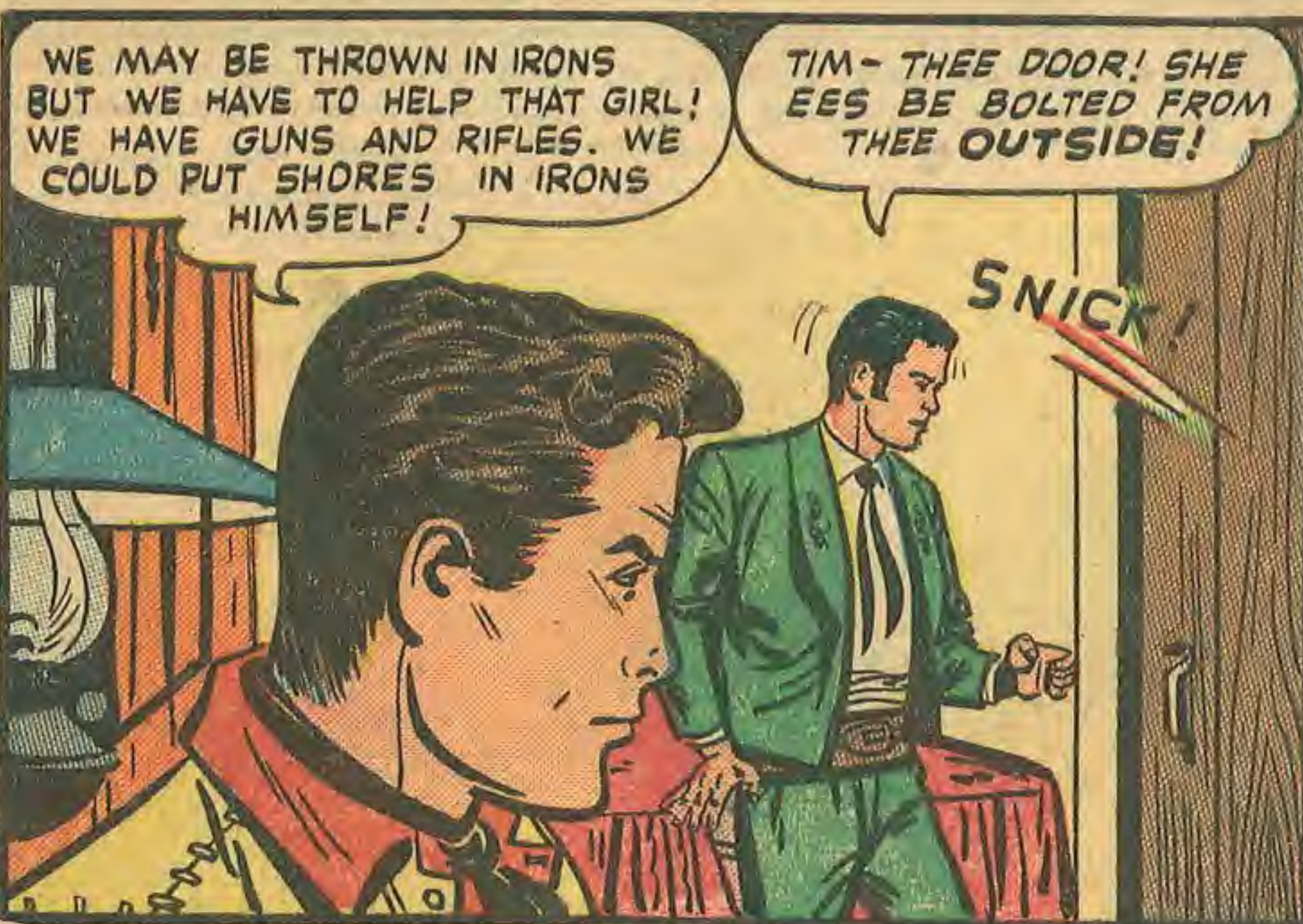
YOU HEARD THAT, CHITO? ON BOARD THIS SHIP SHORES HAS THE POWER AND AUTHORITY OF A KING! WE CAN'T LEGALLY DEFY HIM—HE WOULD HAVE A LEGAL RIGHT TO THROW US IN IRONS!

AY DI MI! WHAT WE DO NOW?



WE MAY BE THROWN IN IRONS BUT WE HAVE TO HELP THAT GIRL! WE HAVE GUNS AND RIFLES. WE COULD PUT SHORES IN IRONS HIMSELF!

TIM—THEE DOOR! SHE EES BE BOLTED FROM THEE OUTSIDE!



SOMEONE DID BOLT IT, CHITO! WE'VE BEEN LOCKED IN!



ABOVE DECKS, GRIM EYES STARE UPWARD AS LIGHTNING SPLITS THE DARKENED SKY! A HOT WIND MOVES ACROSS THE SUDDENLY HEAVING WAVES! TENSE FACES WHITEN IN FEAR,

SHE'S BLOWIN' FAST! A REG'LAR GALE!

IT'S A **TYPHOON!** I KNEW WE'D RUN INTO TROUBLE THIS FAR OFF THE MAINLAND!

SECONDS LATER, THE WIND AND THE RAIN STRIKE THE CLIPPER LIKE GIGANTIC FISTS. THE VESSEL PITCHES AND TOSSES IN THE HUGE WAVES —



AY DI MI! EET EES ALMOST CAVE EEN MY CHEST! CLOSE THEE PORTHOLE, TIM!

NO, CHITO! I'VE AN IDEA —!

I'LL WEAKEN THE HINGES WITH THESE BULLETS. THEN, ON THE NEXT ROLL OF THE SHIP, THE FORCE OF THOSE WAVES SHOULD SMASH OPEN THE DOOR...!

BLAMMM
BLAMMM!

AND THEN —

CHITO! DID YOU FEEL THAT ROLL? IT WAS MUCH WORSE THAN THE OTHERS!

LOOK! THE RUDDER'S GONE! IF IT ISN'T FIXED — THE SHIP WILL BE CAUGHT IN THE TROUGH OF THE WAVES — ROLLED OVER! WE'LL ALL BE LOST!

THE CAPTAIN! HE CAN FEEX IT!

AT THAT INSTANT, WHEN ONLY THE CAPTAIN CAN GIVE ORDERS THAT WILL SAVE ALL LIVES ON BOARD SHIP —

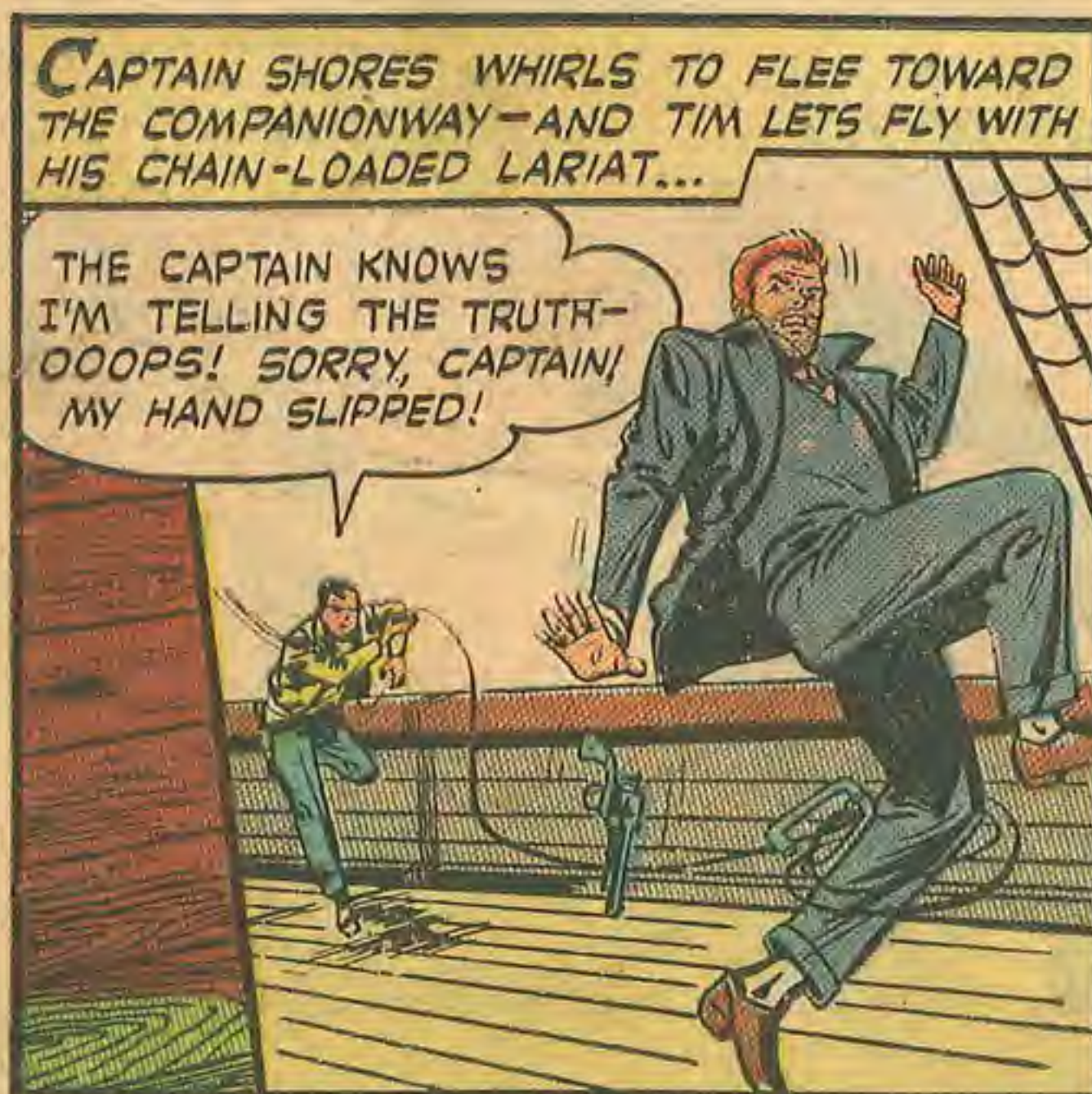
YOU WANTED THIS, CAP'N — HERE IT IS!

THE STORM YOU SAID **WOULDN'T** COME!

THEY ARE KEELING HEEM! CHOKEENG HEEM! BEATING HEEM TO DEATH!



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



JIM TREW WAS A RANCHER NEW TO BULLET BASIN. THERE WAS NO REASON TO KILL HIM—THAT ANYONE KNEW. BUT WHEN ROD BUFORD THREW DOWN ON HIM WHEN HE FOUND TREW ALONE ON THE TRAIL, HE SET IN MOTION A DEADLY SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT WAS TO DRIVE HUB CONSTABLE FROM HIS HOME, AND SEND TIM HOLT RACING AFTER "THE PAINTED!" KILLER!

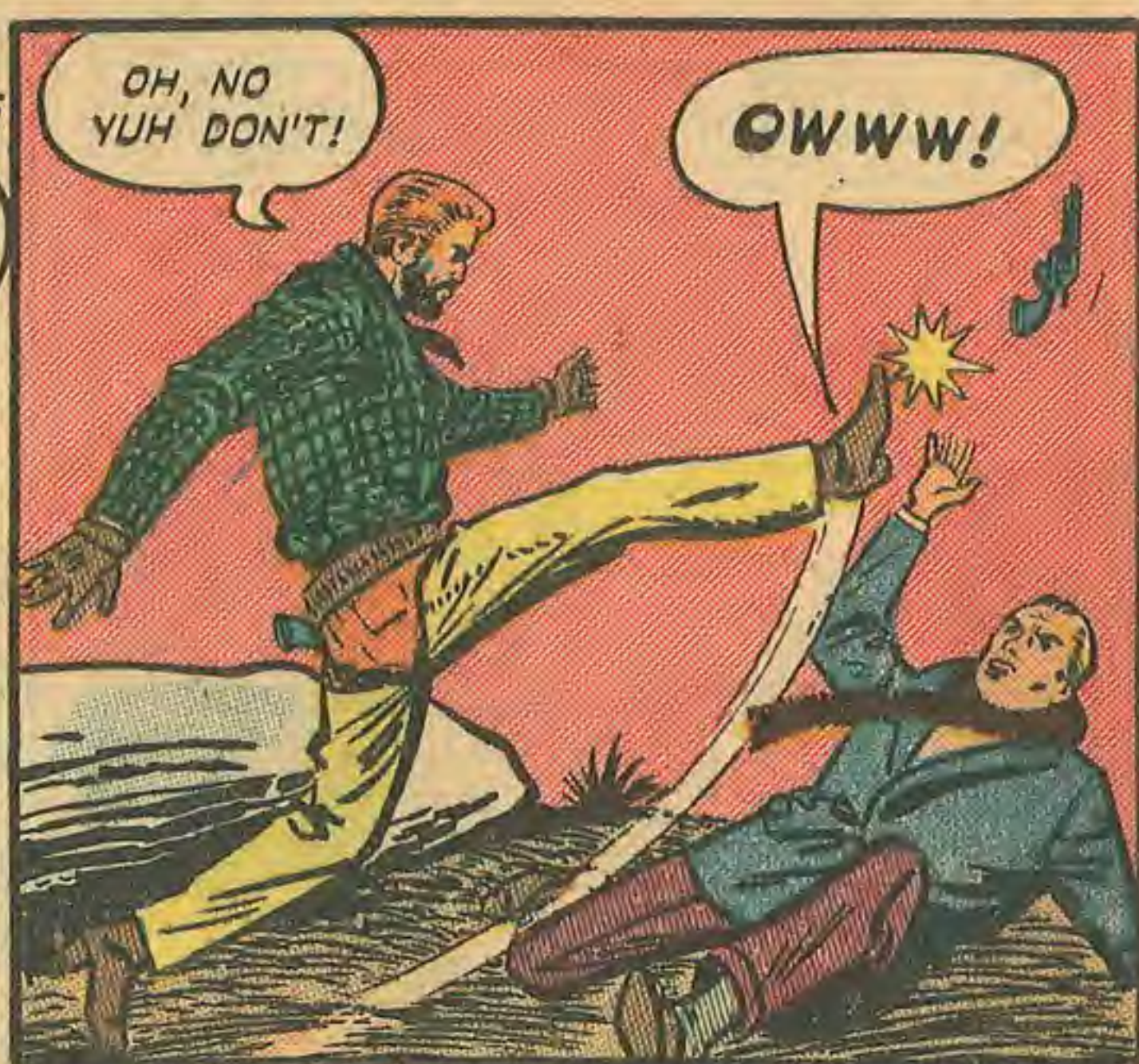


TWO MEN REEL AND STRUGGLE ON THE TRAIL TO BULLET. A MUFFLED SHOUT—A SNARL—AND TWO FORMS TOPPLE FROM THEIR SADDLES...



YUH'LL COME ACROSS, TREW! I KNOW YORE SECRET! IT'S WHAT I'M AFTER—OR YORE LIFE!

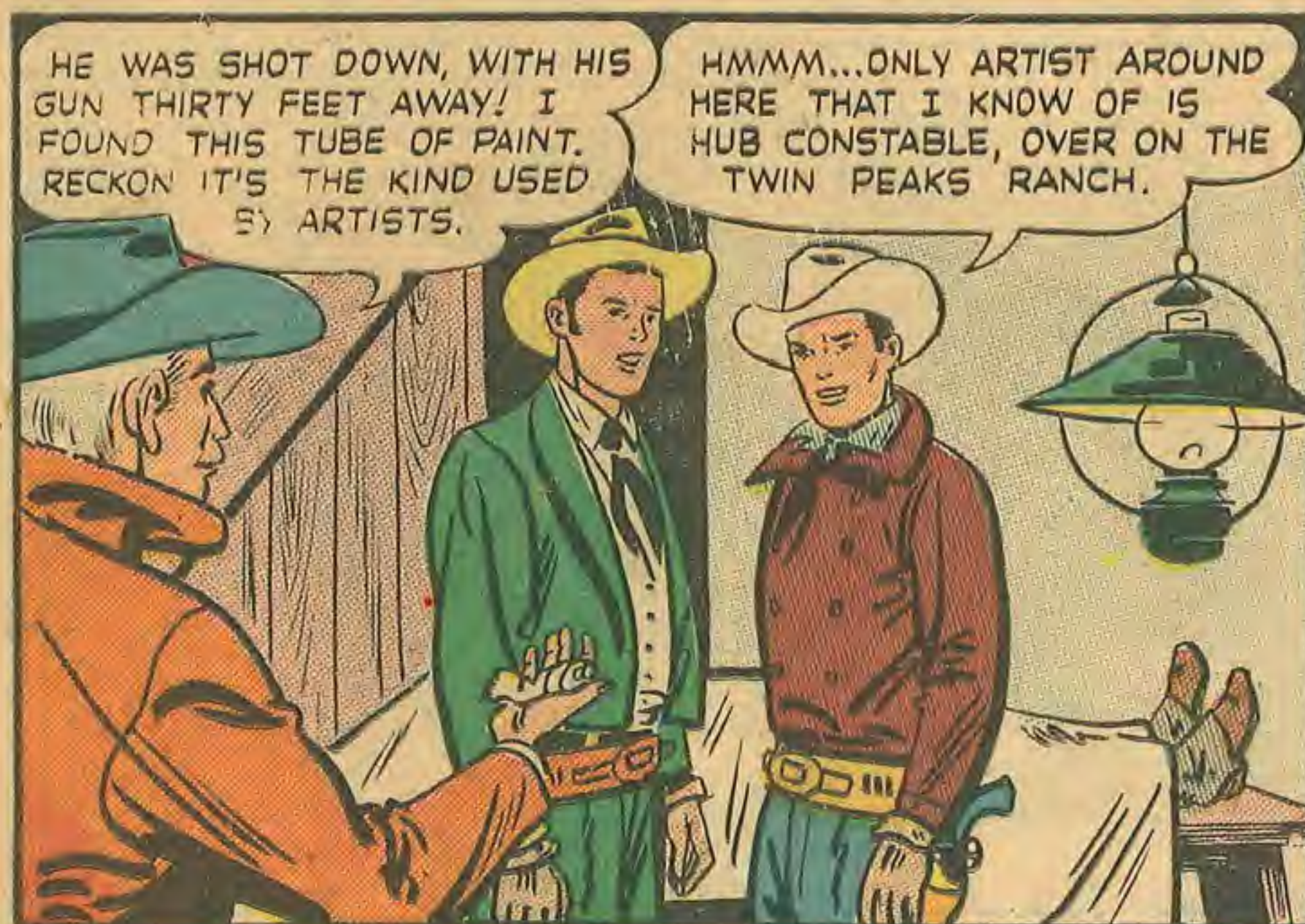
YOU FOUL MURDERING WHELP! I'LL SHOOT YOU LIKE I WOULD A MAD DOG—!



OH, NO YUH' DON'T!

OWWW!

TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT

CAREFULLY PLANTING HIMSELF IN THE KILLER'S BOOT MARKS, TIM HOLDS HIS GUN IN HIS LEFT HAND...



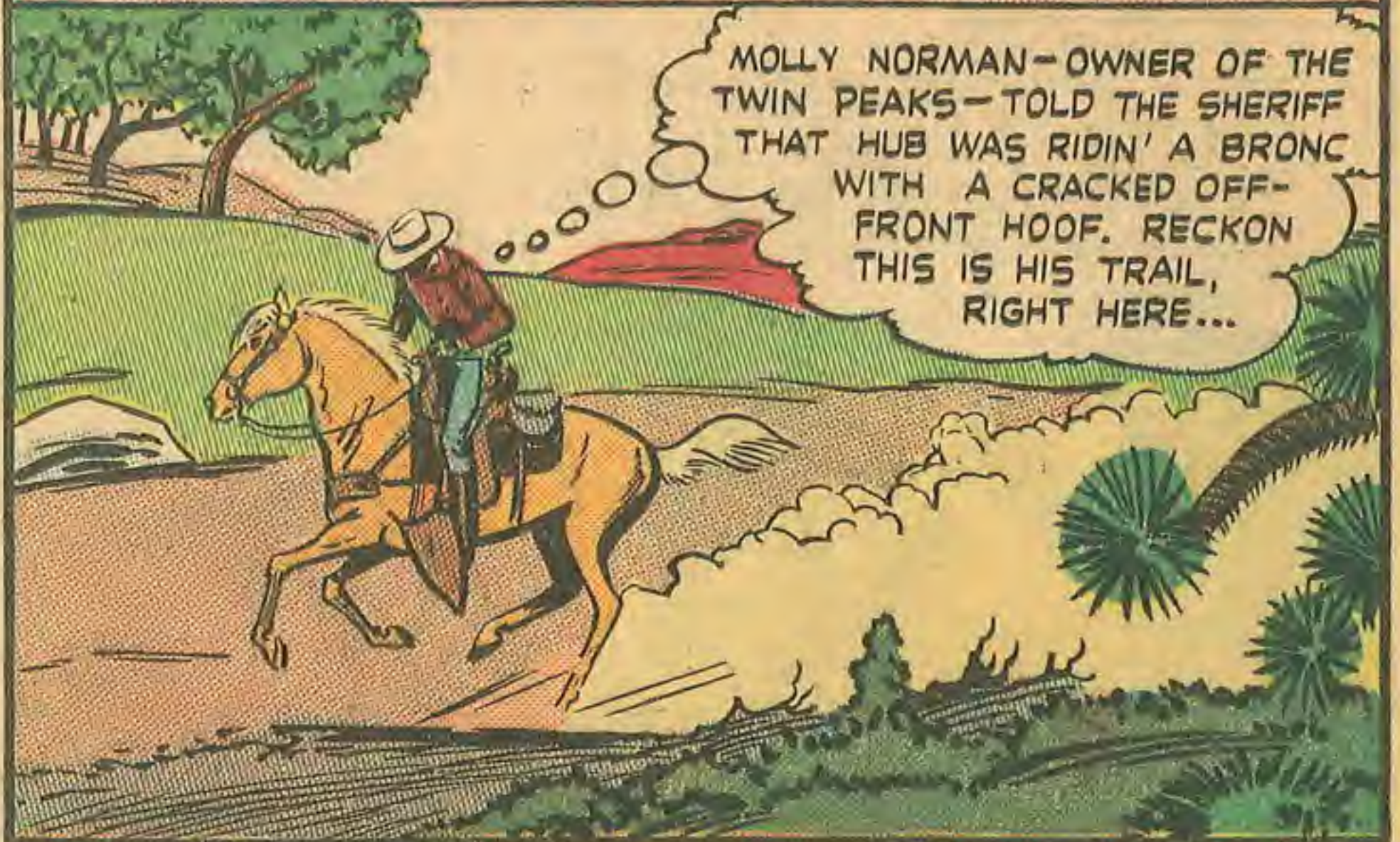
BUT IF THE KILLER WERE LEFT-HANDED... AND SHOT FROM HERE... THE WOUND TREW RECEIVED WOULD BE ANGLED JUST AS IT WAS! RECKON THE HOMBRE WHO SHOT HIM WAS LEFT-HANDED, ALL-RIGHT...

TIM RIDES ON, UNAWARE THAT HE HIMSELF IS BEING FOLLOWED BY A THIN-LIPPED KILLER...



I'M PLAYIN' THIS IN LUCK! ONLY ONE DEPUTY IS GOIN' AFTER CONSTABLE. I'LL GO ALONG WITH HIM - HE KNOWS THE COUNTRY, SO HE'S GOT A BETTER CHANCE OF FINDIN' CONSTABLE THAN I HAVE!

A FEW MILES ABOVE THE TWIN PEAKS RANCH YARD, TIM PICKS UP THE TRACKS OF HUB CONSTABLE'S HORSE...



MOLLY NORMAN - OWNER OF THE TWIN PEAKS - TOLD THE SHERIFF THAT HUB WAS RIDIN' A BRONC WITH A CRACKED OFF-FRONT HOOF. RECKON THIS IS HIS TRAIL, RIGHT HERE...

HIGH IN THE TIMBER BELT, YOUNG HUB CONSTABLE IS TAUT WITH FEAR. HIS SHAKING HANDS LIFT A RIFLE AGAIN AND AGAIN...



I'LL KILL HIM! I WON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE. I'LL GUN HIM AS SOON AS I SET EYES ON HIM... IF I GET THE CHANCE...!

THAT HOMBRE HAS BEEN SHOOTIN' AT ME FOR THE LAST THREE, FOUR DAYS, EVER SINCE I WENT PAINT-IN' UP IN THE RIPSAWS! I CAN'T TAKE NO MORE! I'M RIDIN' OUT OF THIS RANGE... SOON'S I GET SOME FOOD...

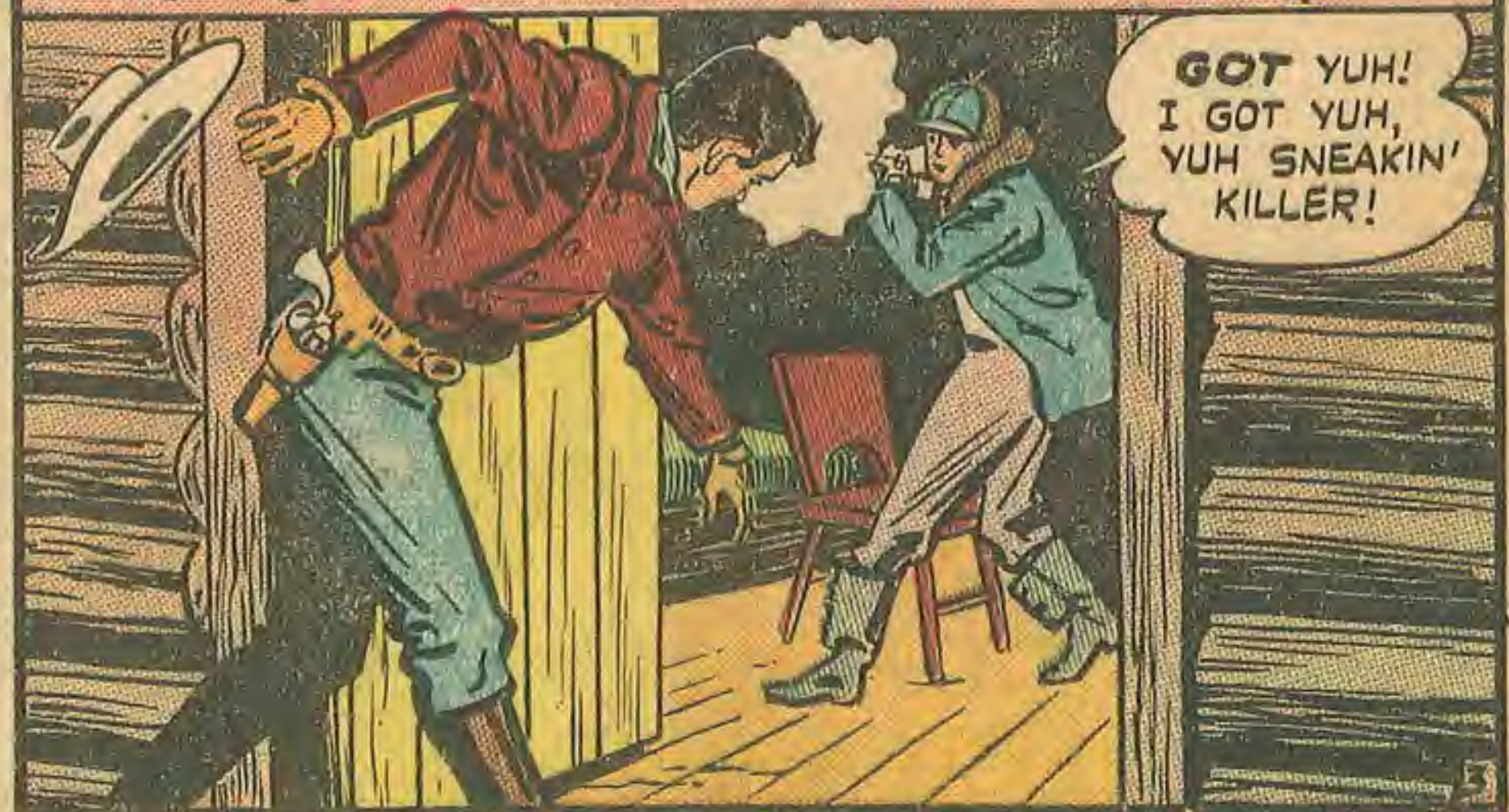


I GOT TO SHOOT ME AN ANTELOPE - JERKY THE MEAT - PACK IT ON MY SADDLER. THEN I -



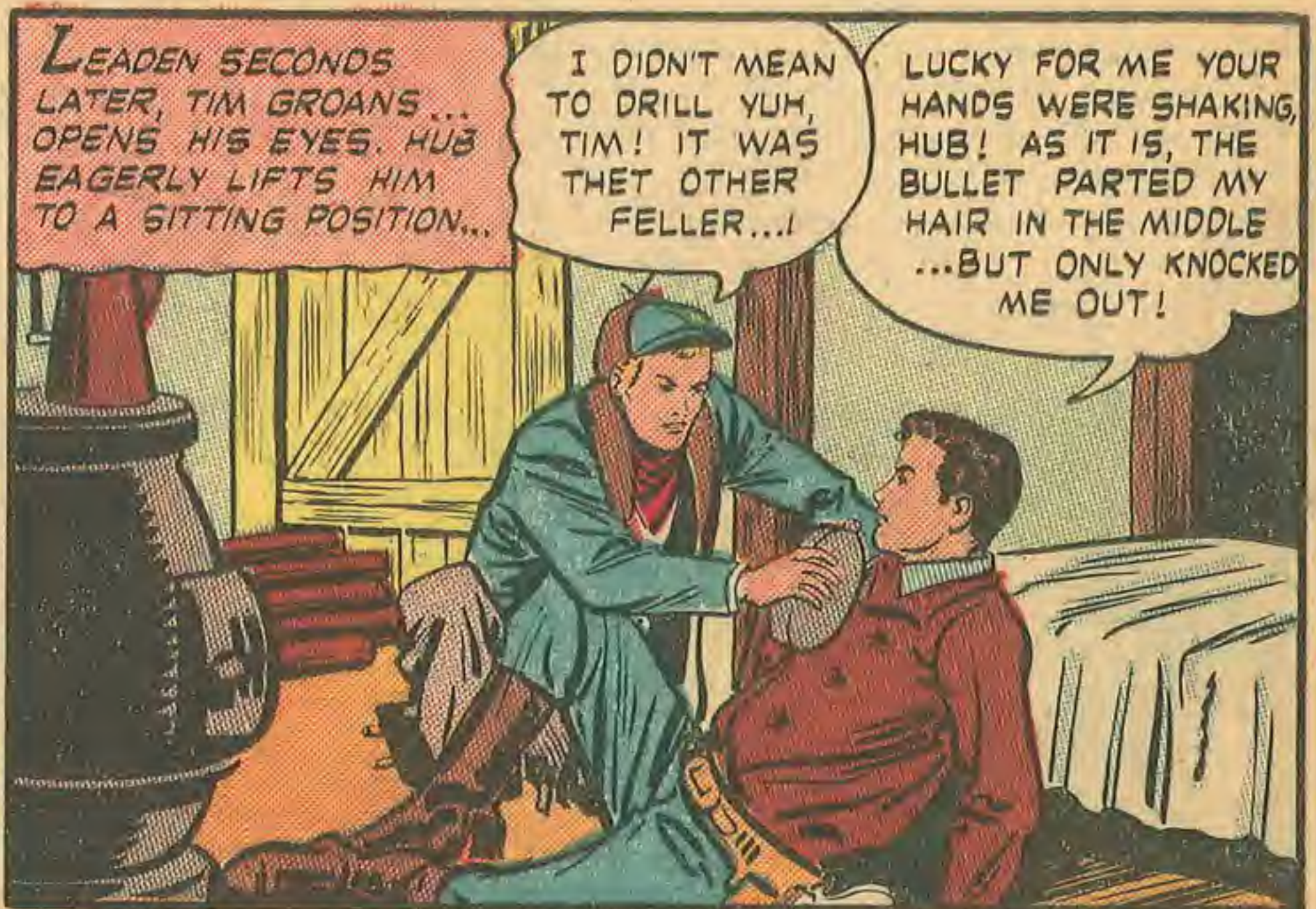
WHAT'S THAT?

HIS NERVES MADE RAW BY NIGHTS OF SLEEPLESSNESS AND DAYS WHEN ANY MOMENT MIGHT BRING A DEATH-DEALING BULLET, HUB WHIRLS. HIS FINGER TIGHTENS ON HIS RIFLE TRIGGER...

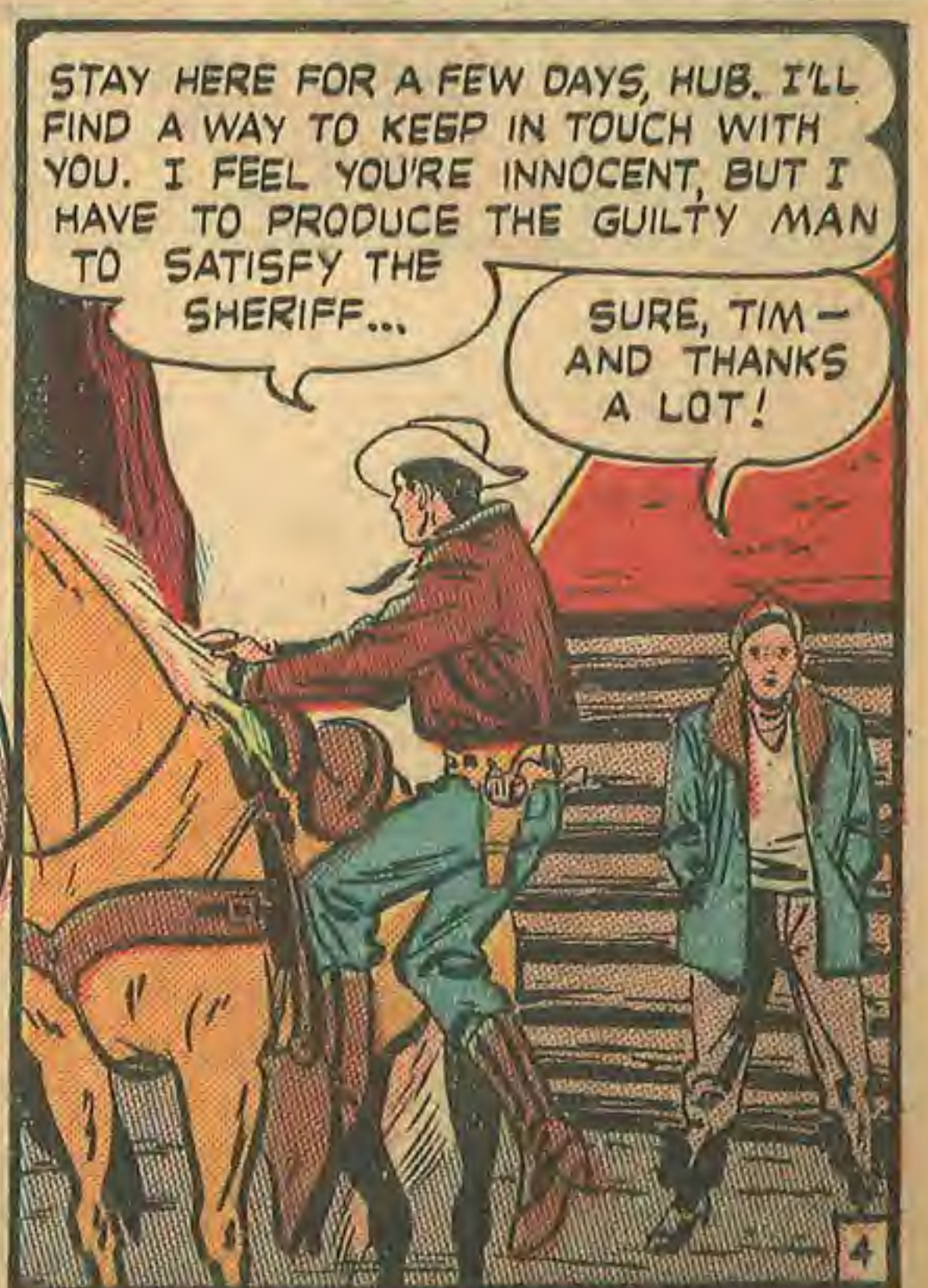


GOT YUH! I GOT YUH, YUH SNEAKIN' KILLER!

TIM HOLT



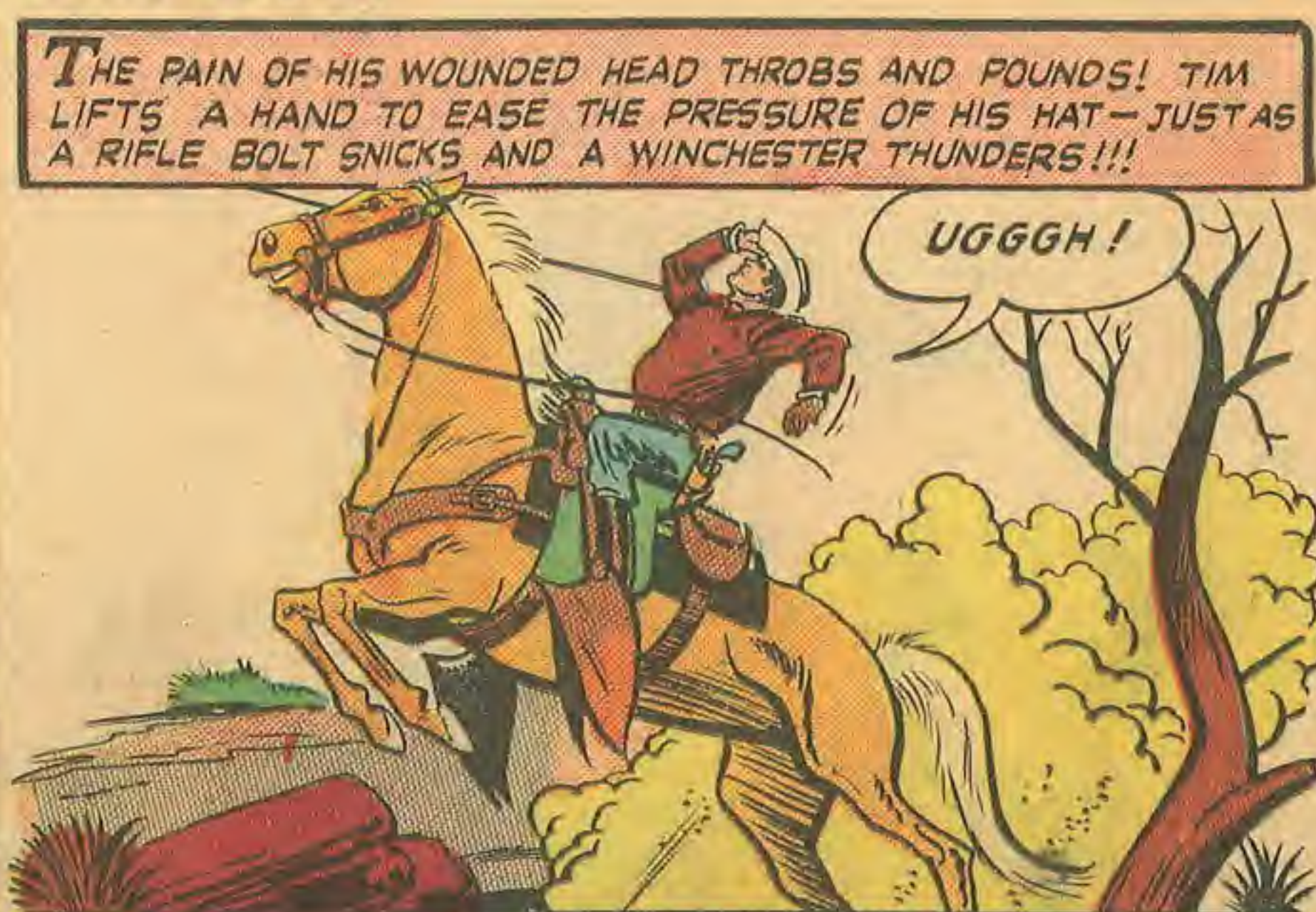
AS TIM LEAVES THE CABIN, HE IS WATCHED ACROSS THE VEE SIGHTS OF A RIFLE SOME TWO HUNDRED YARDS AWAY...



TIM HOLT



I FIGGERED THE DEPUTY'D BRING CONSTABLE IN WITH HIM—BUT I CAN GET RID OF 'EM SEPARATE JUST AS EASY AS BOTH TOGETHER!

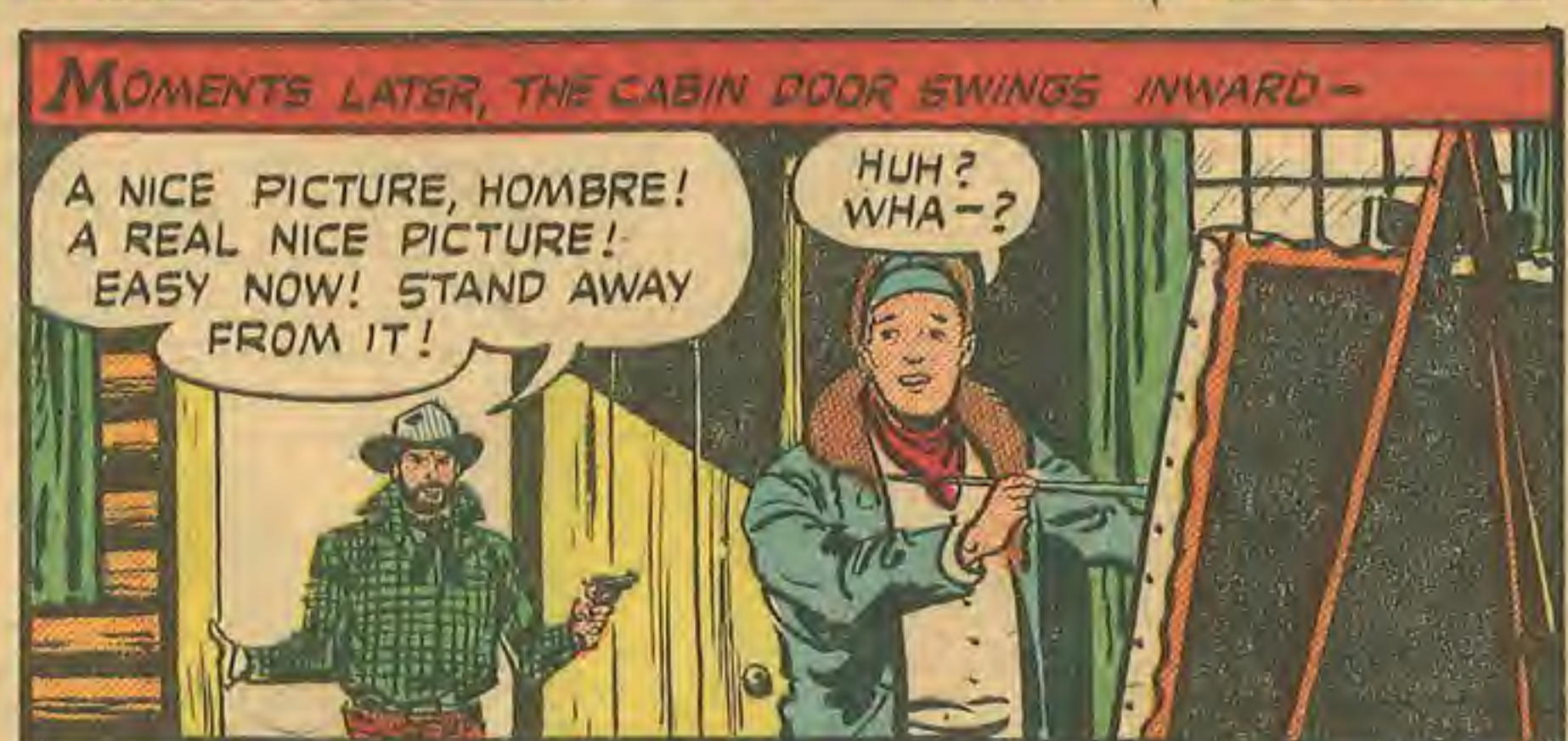


THE PAIN OF HIS WOUNDED HEAD THROBS AND POUNDS! TIM LIFTS A HAND TO EASE THE PRESSURE OF HIS HAT—JUST AS A RIFLE BOLT SNICKS AND A WINCHESTER THUNDERS!!!

UGGGH!



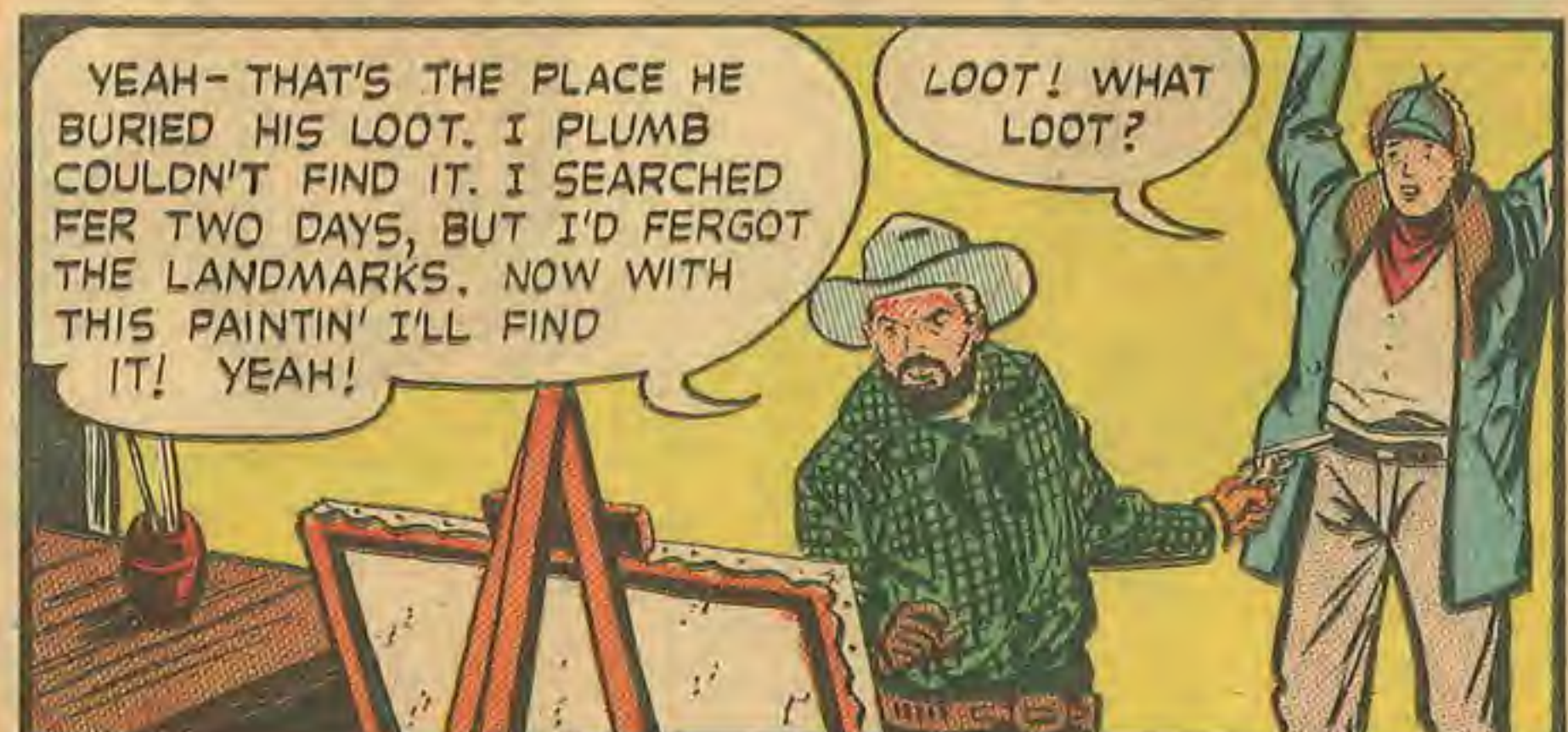
HE'S OUT OF THE WAY! NOW FOR CONSTABLE AN' THAT PAINTIN' OF HIS! TOO BAD FER CONSTABLE HE SEEN ME WATCHIN' TREW THAT DAY AS HE WAS DIGGIN'. TOO BAD FER HIM—BUT **LUCKY** FER ME!



MOMENTS LATER, THE CABIN DOOR SWINGS INWARD—

A NICE PICTURE, HOMBRE! A REAL NICE PICTURE! EASY NOW! STAND AWAY FROM IT!

HUH? WHA—?



YEAH—THAT'S THE PLACE HE BURIED HIS LOOT. I PLUMB COULDN'T FIND IT. I SEARCHED FER TWO DAYS, BUT I'D FERGOT THE LANDMARKS. NOW WITH THIS PAINTIN' I'LL FIND IT! YEAH!

LOOT! WHAT LOOT?

WITH A GRIM SMILE, ROD BUFORD EXPLAINS: "I CAME INTO THIS RANGE THROUGH RIPSAP PASS. NOBODY KNEW ME HERE. I DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY. FIRST DAY, THOUGH, I STUMBLED ON JIM TREW—DIGGING...!"



SHINE, YOU BEAUTIES! DOZENS OF PERFECT DIAMONDS! THE LOOT OF A JEWELRY ROBBERY BACK EAST. ALL—MINE!



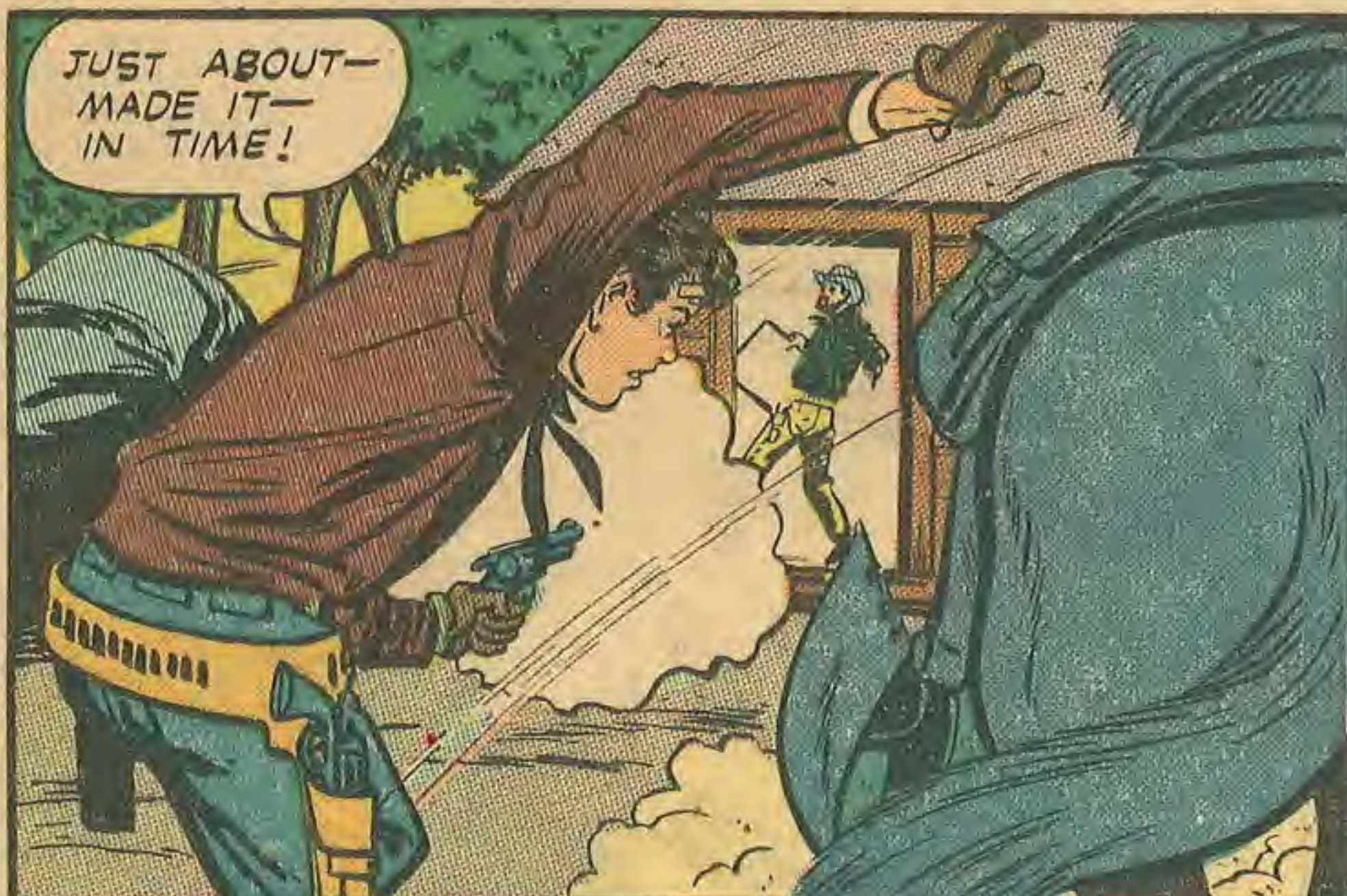
IT WAS A FORTUNE! I WAS JUST FIXIN' TO SALIVATE HIM WHEN I SAW YOU—PAINTIN'! I VAMOSSED BUT TRAILED TREW—SHOT AN' KILLED HIM—JUST LIKE I'M GOIN' TO SHOOT AN' KILL YUH! I MISSED YUH BEFORE—BUT I WON'T MISS NOW!

TIM HOLT

LESS THAN A MILE AWAY, TIM STIRS AND MOVES ALONG THE GROUND, PAIN THROBBING IN HEAD AND ARM.



FIGHTING THE SICK DIZZINESS THAT FILLS HIM, TIM CLINGS TO SADDLE AND STIRRUP —



TIM HOLT

LIKE AN ENRAGED WILDCAT, TIM FORGETS HIS PAIN! HE CATAPULTS HIMSELF AT THE KILLER! RAMS HIM WITH A MUSCLE STUPPED SHOULDER!

OWWFF!

RECKON— YOU HAVE JUST ABOUT— COME TO THE END OF THE TRAIL!



YUH CRAZY GALOOT! THIS TIME I'LL FINISH YUH OFF!



ALTHOUGH THE SHOCK OF HIS FALL NUMBS HIS RIGHT SIDE, TIM LASHES OUT WITH HIS FOOT —



NO, YOU DON'T!



TIM LIFTS HIS FEET IN A WILD CONTORTION AS HE THUDS DOWN ON THE WILDLY STRUGGLING BUFORD. THE KILLER CRIES OUT SHARPLY... AND GOES LIMP...

RECKON MY KNEES-AGAINST YOUR SIXGUN — IS A FAIR FIGHT...



HE SHOT TREW. HE TOLD ME TREW HAD DIAMONDS HIDDEN. TREW WAS A CROOK BACK EAST WHO CAME OUT HERE UNTIL THE HEAT DIED DOWN! BUT BUFORD COULDN'T FIND WHERE TREW BURIED THE DIAMONDS. HE WANTED MY PAINTING TO SERVE AS A SORT OF MAP...



THAT WAS WHY HE WANTED TO KILL YOU, HUB. YOU WERE THE ONLY MAN IN THE BASIN WHO EVER SAW HIM, OUTSIDE OF TREW. AND TREW IS DEAD. HE'D HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT... IF YOU HADN'T WOUNDED ME SO I WOULD LIFT MY ARM AND SAVE MY LIFE WHEN HE SHOT ME!



RECKON WE CAN BOTH RIDE DOWN TO BULLET NOW, TIM. YOU WITH YOUR PRISONER— AN' ME WITHOUT THE FEAR OF BEING SHOT!

THE END

TIM HOLT

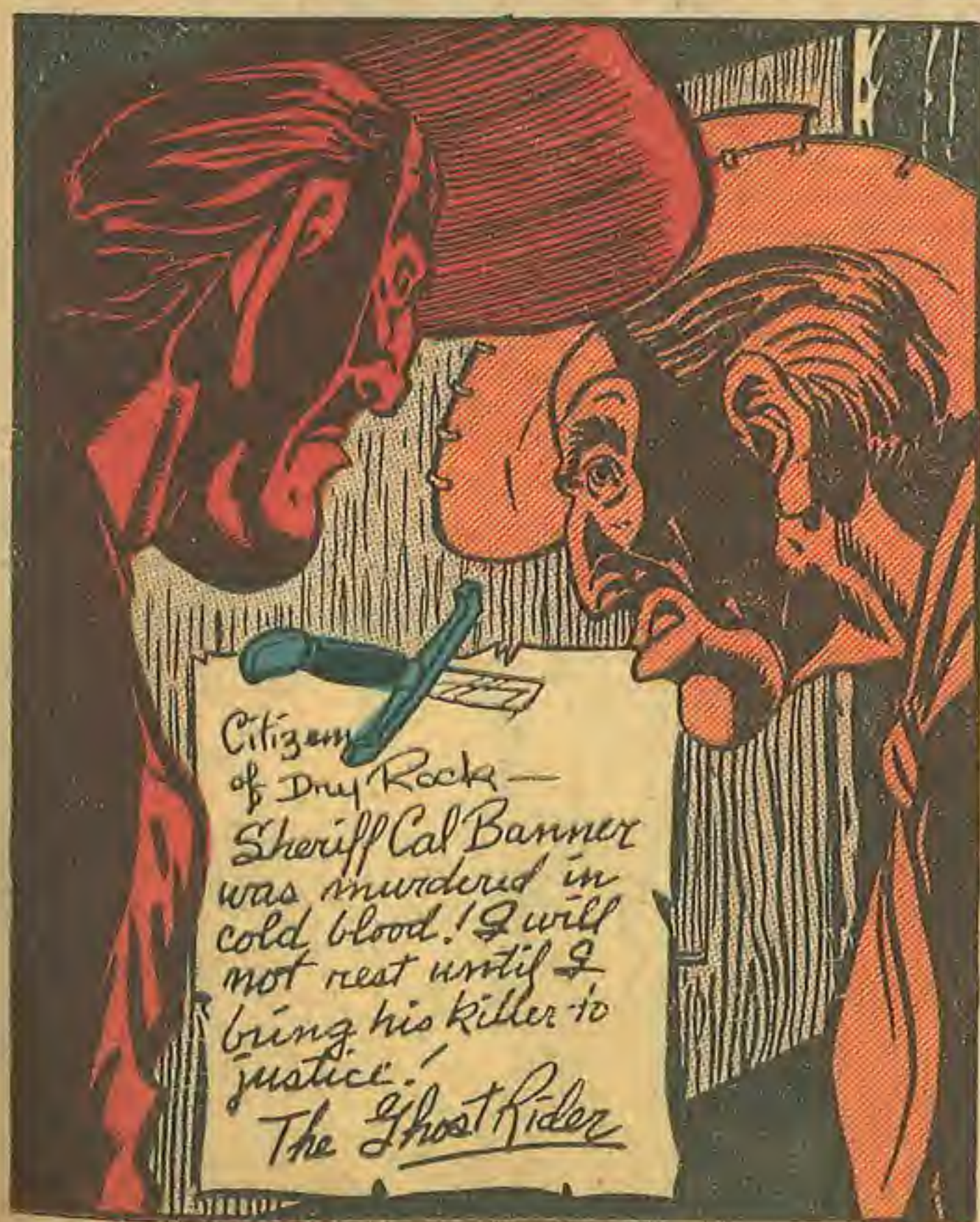
the GHOST RIDER

DICK
AYERS

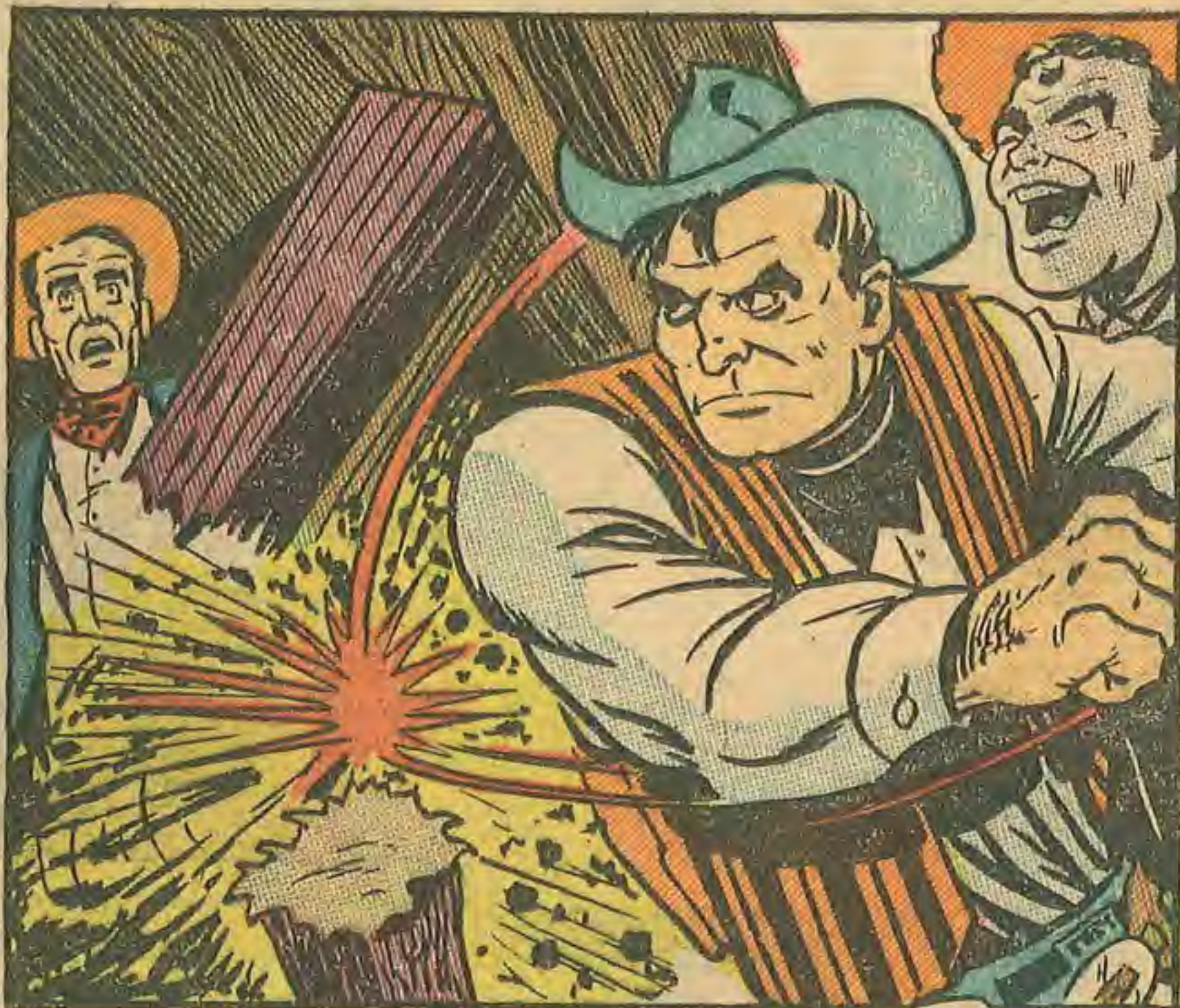
THE
DEAD ONES
RISE TO
CONDEMN
YOUR CRIME,
MURDERER!

THE GHOST RIDER, SPECTRAL NEMESIS OF JUSTICE, BRINGS ANOTHER CRIMINAL TO THE END OF A KILLER'S CAREER. STRIKING NERVE-CURDLING TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF HIS ENEMIES, THE GHOST RIDER TAKES HIS SKILLFUL KNOWLEDGE OF THE MINDS OF MEN—AND ADDS IT TO THE WHIP OF GUILTY CONSCIENCE IN **"SCOURGE OF GUILT!"**

GHOSTS!
GHOSTS!
GHOSTS!



TIM HOLT



I SENT FOR YOU BECAUSE OF YOUR FINE REPUTATION AS THE *ROUGHEST, TOUGHEST* GUNRIDERS IN THE TERRITORY. NO ONE CAN MATCH YOUR *STRENGTH*, YOUR *UTTER FEARLESSNESS*. BOTH OF YOU ARE *DELIGHTFULLY CRUEL*!

WAL - WE TRY!

I NEED YOUR PROTECTION - AND I'LL PAY YOU WELL! YOU SEE, **I'M** THE ONE WHO KILLED SHERIFF BANNER. I HAD TO GET RID OF HIM WHEN HE FOUND ME FAKING A LAND TITLE. YOU PROBABLY KNOW ALREADY THAT THE GHOST RIDER HAS PLEDGED TO AVENGE THE SHERIFF... ?

TIM HOLT



AND IN THE SECRET BACK ROOM OF SING SONG'S LAUNDRY SHOP...



TIM HOLT



BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS OVER, THEY'LL ALL HAVE GOOD REASON TO FEAR THE GHOST RIDER!

OH MY, OH ME - WARM-HOT TIME IN OLD TOWN TONIGHT, YOU BETCHA!



THAT NIGHT - AT THE LOST GAP HOTEL ...

GIT YORE WARBAG PACKED, SPIKE. WE'RE DUE OUT TUH CALVERT'S RANCH TONIGHT TUH BEGIN THIS HERE PER-TECTION JOB!

RIGHT! SAY D YUH FIGGER THIS GHOST RIDER TO BE A' REAL LIVE SPOOK?



NOW WHUT KIND O' TALK IS THET? THAR AIN'T NO SECH THING AS SPOOKS! YUH TURNIN' SOFT ON ME?

AW, I WLIZ JIST FUNNIN' PARDNER! IT'LL TAKE A HEAP SIGHT MORE'N A OLD SPOOK TUH SKEER ME!



BUT, SUDDENLY!

HEY! WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS?



THE GHOST RIDER!

IT IS I - HE WHO RIDES IN DARKNESS, IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT, AND THE GLOOM OF THE GRAVE!



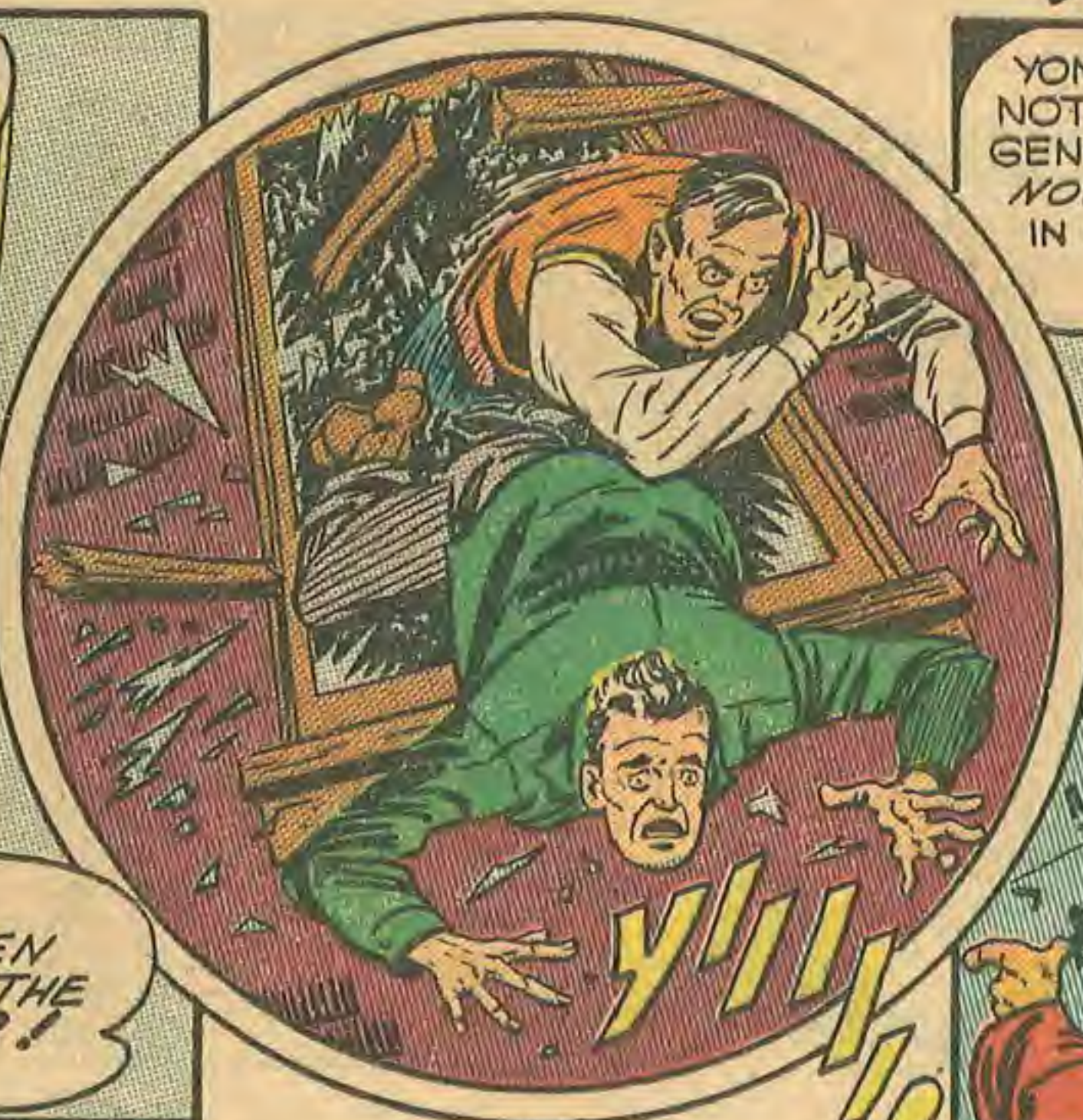
DIDYA GIT 'IM?

YUH KIDDIN'? AFORE I EVEN STARTED SHOOTIN', HE JIST SORTA - GULP - DISAPPEARED!

THE BLACK SIDE OF MY CAPE CERTAINLY COMES IN HANDY FOR THE OLD VANISHING ACT! BUT, NOW TO WORK ...



THOUGH I BE INVISIBLE, STUPID ONES - THOUGH I BE OF MIST AND SPIRIT - STILL YOU MAY FEEL MY FISTS!



THE
GHOST RIDER
KNOWS THE
MINDS OF MEN—
FOR FEAR
CLOSES ITS ICY
FIST AROUND
JEB CALVERT'S
HEART...

AT
CALVERT'S
RANCHHOUSE
...



TIM HOLT



THE GHOST RIDER!
AI-EE-EE-EE-EE!



I HAVE COME FOR YOU, MURDERER OF SHERIFF BANNER! YOU MAY FLEE TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH, BUT YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME!



NO! HE'LL NEVER GET ME! NEVER! I'LL RIDE TO DEVIL'S HOLE — NO ONE KNOWS THAT SPOT BUT ME!



I LOST HIM! SAFE! (sob) SAFE AT LAST!



JEB CALVERT! EVEN FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE DEEPEST WATERS I COME! CONFESS YOUR CRIME, JEB CALVERT!

NO! NO! NO! NO!



I'LL KILL YOU FIRST! I'LL GET YOU — I'LL GET YOU!

BANG!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!



YOU CANNOT KILL THE ALREADY DEAD, JEB CALVERT!

HE'S STILL THERE! I'M GOING MAD, MAD! I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY, GOT TO...



THAT BOOK ON VENTRILOQUISM I SENT FOR CERTAINLY CAME IN HANDY. HE WAS SO SCARED IT NEVER OCCURRED TO HIM THAT WHAT HE SAW WAS MY REFLECTION FROM UP HERE!

TIM HOLT

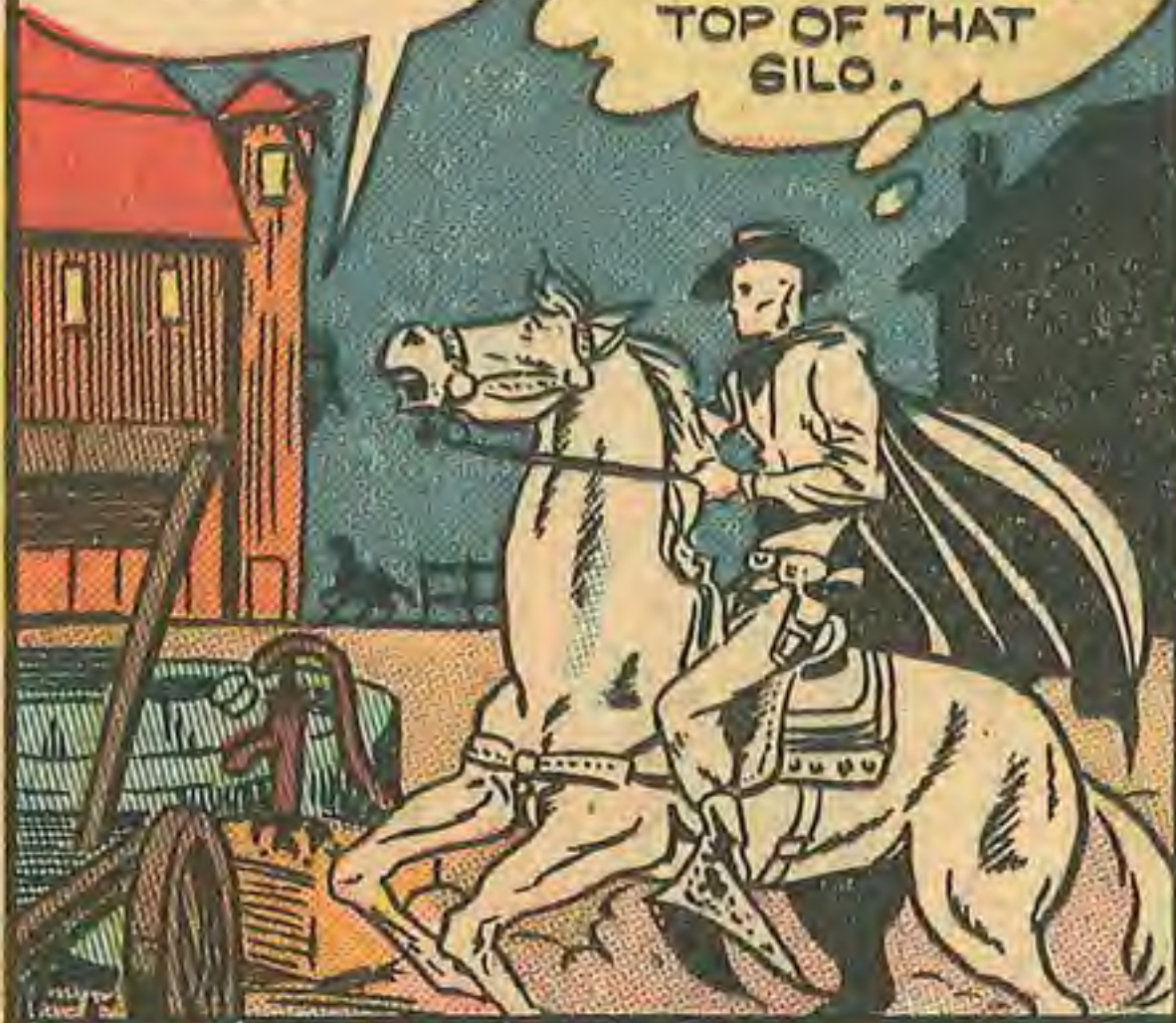
CRAZED WITH FEAR AND GUILT, CALVERT TWISTS AND TURNS IN HIS MAD FLIGHT — BUT IT SEEMS THE GHOST RIDER IS EVERYWHERE.

NO LONGER ABLE TO REASON SANELY, HE CLIMBS A SILO.



I'LL BE SAFE UP HERE! ONLY WAY UP IS THIS LADDER AND I CAN DEFEND THAT!

NOW, THAT'S A CRAZY THING FOR HIM TO DO — THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO BEAT HIM TO THE TOP OF THAT SILO.



ALL I HAVE TO DO IS LOOP MY LARIAT OVER THAT WINCH ARM UP THERE — AND LET MY HORSE, SPECTRE, PULL ONE END...



... AND I GET LIFTED UP LIKE A BALE OF HAY. MY LARIAT, BEING SPECIALLY DYED BLACK, IS **INVISIBLE** — CALVERT WILL THINK I'M FLYING!



HIGH OR LOW, STILL I COME, JEB CALVERT! CONFESS! GIVE UP!

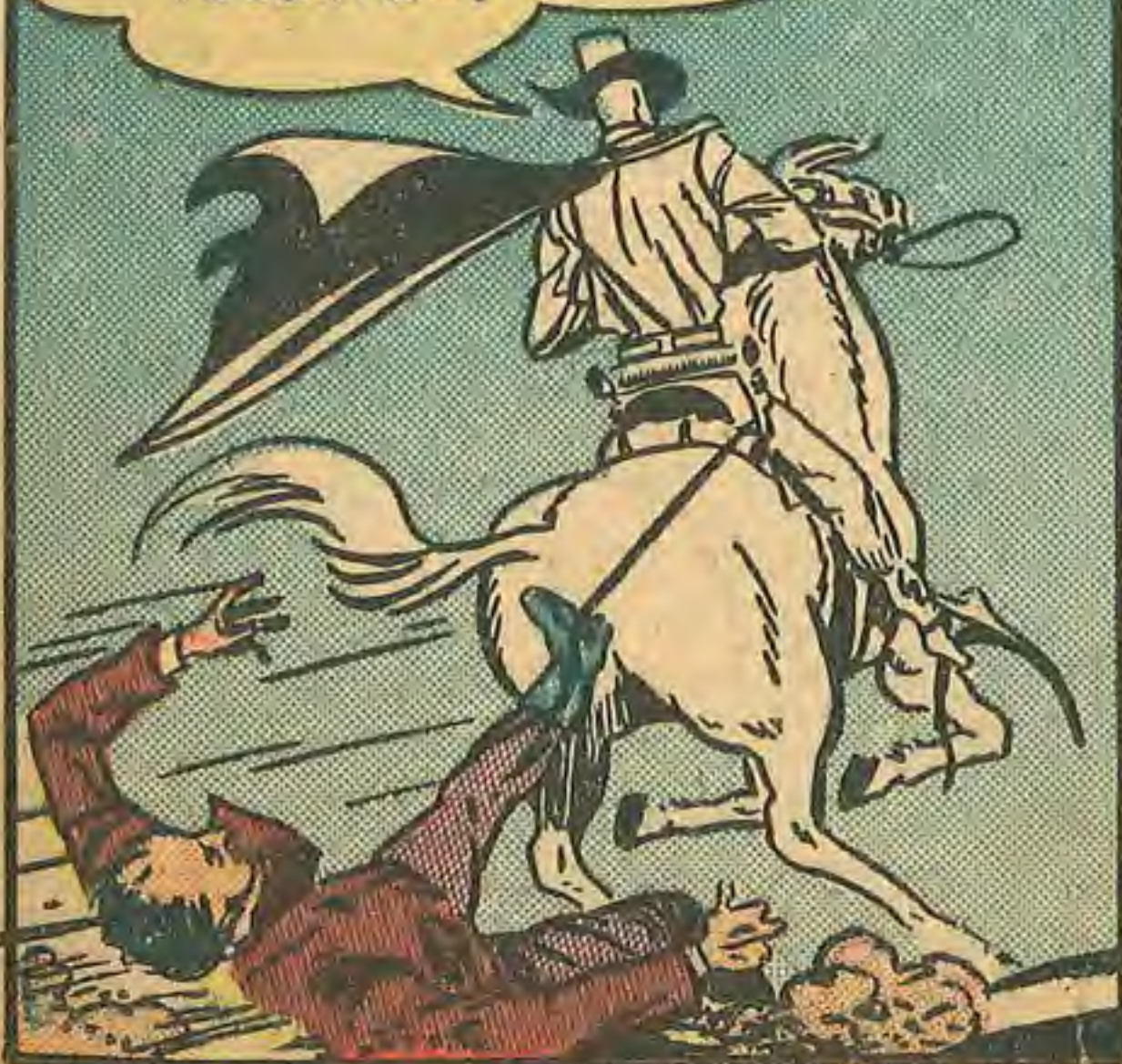
THIS FIEND FLIES! HE IS A GHOST! THERE'S NO USE GOING ON — NO USE LIVING! I'LL JUMP!



NO, JEB CALVERT! WE WILL GO DOWN TOGETHER!



AND WE'LL GO BACK TO TOWN AND TO JUSTICE TOGETHER!



HERE HE IS, CITIZENS — THE MURDERER OF SHERIFF BANNER! THE GHOST RIDER NEVER FAILS!

YES, I DID IT! I DID IT! JAIL ME, KILL ME. — ANYTHING! JUST GET ME AWAY FROM THIS FIEND!





JIM THURLOW shifted his weight in the Pueblo saddle so that the stiff leather creaked. He put a shaking hand to his blue shirt and rubbed the sweat off his palm. He was afraid: afraid of the lurking *something* that lay in the timbered slopes of the Horsehead Mountains, all around him, afraid of the fate that might await him as it had awaited so many others. Even the weight of his heavy Colt revolver against his thigh brought no reassurance.

A dead man lay huddled in a crushed cactus at the hoofs of his bay gelding. The dead man had been a friend, a little rancher with whom he had laughed back in Natahatchi. On his face was the burned imprint of a branding iron in the shape of a hook. The dead man was the fifth such man that Jim Thurlowe had found in the last two months.

"Might be I was plumb hasty in takin' over this marshal job," he told the gelding. "Now I got to go on up there—back into the high hills—and try to learn what hombre is stampin' dead men with a hook iron."

He eased himself out of the kak and lifted down a short spade from his saddle roll. He dug a shallow grave and covered it with stones. Then he drew a sleeve across his damp forehead and squinted thoughtfully at the setting sun.

"Don't cotton to the idea of bein' alone up here at night, but I reckon I can't ride back down to Natahatchi without some sort of action to show for my ride. Folks have been

askin' embarrassin' questions about me, lately. They want to know who's been doin' all the killin' and brandin' up here on Horsehead."

Sighing, Thurlowe stepped into the stirrup and swung up. He eased the bay forward under the firs and the cedars, moving steadily upward along a carpet of fallen pine needles. As he rode, he loosened the revolver in its holster at his side.

The killings—all five of them, all with the hook brand etched into their faces with a red-hot branding iron—had begun a little over two months ago. Prior to the first killing, the small ranchers on the slopes of Horsehead Mountain had reported cattle missing. There had been no clues as to where they had gone, but one rancher told Thurlowe that he was "fixin' to ride straight up old Horsehead. Them steers got to be somewhere. If they ain't below my spread, they sure got to be above it!" Two days later, the rancher's body, riddled with shells and branded on the cheek, had been discovered.

"It was right after that when the folks got scared," the marshal brooded. "Two other hombres turned up the same way—shot and branded! Those hooks on their faces—burned deep! Hooks of horror, everybody called 'em."

And now old Ed Silliman lay in a shallow grave, back there a few miles. Number five in the hook-brand mystery! A cold wind came down out of the Horsehead pines and made

TIM HOLT

Jim Thurlowe shiver. Would he be—*number six?*

He was bending his head to pass under the curving branch of a giant conifer when something thin and wet whipped across his face—

Jim Thurlowe screamed. Whatever it was stung and bit, and clung like a living thing to his chin and throat! After a moment it slipped down off his chin, circling his neck. It tightened, squeezing! Thurlowe heard a low roaring in his ears, saw tiny red globes of pain swim up before his staring eyes!

His hands clawed at the thing. In the darkness he had not recognized it. Now his fingers knew it as a lariat, dipped in water. And then, just when his fingers were ripping at it to loosen it, the red pain swam up all around him, knocking him backwards into a roaring blackness. . . .

Jim Thurlowe opened his eyes to the red dance of a campfire. Three men were watching him carefully, their cruel little eyes bright in the firelight. One was an Indian with black, dank hair framing his flat, coppery face, his muscular arms bare and long. The others were heavy-browed, their faces revealing the greeds and hungers that directed their every move. In them, Thurlowe recognized typical outlaws.

One of the white men, a man with a dotted neckerchief hanging around his neck, kicked suddenly at a branding iron buried in the glowing red logs of the fire. His grin was sly.

He asked, "Yuh been shadowin' us long enough to have known yore way in an' out of these hills, lawman! We're plumb surprised yuh fell into our little trap."

To speak hurt his throat, but Jim Thurlowe forced his words. "Shadow you? I've never been on these heights before."

The other white man, a slight beard hiding his jaw and mouth, stepped across the edge of the fire and drove a fist into Thurlowe's face. "Don't lie to us, marshal. It ain't healthy! We ain't babes in these woods. We've heard yuh out there, spyin' on us. But even the 'breed couldn't find yuh! What's yore secret? We sure nuff aim to learn it. Might come in handy, eh, Hal?"

The man with the spotted neckerchief laughed. "Sure will, 'specially when we move down onto the flats some night to rustle off some more beef."

The Indian moved, bending forward, staring with his flat black eyes into the bright flames. He grunted in satisfaction. "Brand hot now. Make good mark."

Jim Thurlowe froze. His muscles tensed against the ropes that bound him to a big stake. His eyes were drawn by the brand as by a

magnet. "You—you aren't fixin' to mark me—with that?"

The man with the beard slid around behind Thurlowe and looped another lariat over his arms, and neck. The knot of the noose pressed the back of his neck. A savage voice grated in his ear, "Thet's just what we do aim to do, hombre! We don't want no folks climbin' this mountain! If we want folks to see us, we'll come down—fer their cattle. Haw! Haw! Red-man—grab holt of that iron. Git a move on!"

The breed bent forward, lifted the hot red brand. The man behind Thurlowe tensed his powerful body as Jim prepared to struggle.

And then—

The night came alive with sound!

A horse was thundering through the underbrush—a great giant of a white stallion, mane flying in the breeze, hooves thudding on the hard ground! In the saddle, swaying easily to the mad pace of the white horse—black emptiness! *Nothing!*

A cry broke from the lips of the petrified half-breed! He dropped the branding iron and tried to run. But the man with the spotted neckerchief was thrusting him aside. The white horse hit the two of them with his chest and sent them reeling, screaming with pain and fright, onto the blazing fire.

A pale, glowing hand moved from the darkness on top of the stallion—reached down and seemed to bury itself in the shoulder of the man behind Thurlowe—lifted the man and flung him violently aside!

Jim Thurlowe needed only a few seconds to shuck off the ropes that bound him. His hand clawed for his gun on a nearby stool. He whirled, gun in hand—

Now the man that bestrode the white stallion was visible. He was white and shining, as a ghost might be. In his hand a long black whip, almost invisible in the night, lay coiled. Thurlowe gulped in sudden awe. "You—I know you! Men call you—the *Ghost Rider!*"

A deep, sonorous voice answered him. "That is right. I have been watching these men for some days. They heard me, but could not see me. I have marked their hiding places, their cattle grazelands, on this map—together with a record of the men they have killed. Take it. Take the men to town. See that they pay—at the end of a hangman's noose!"

Jim Thurlowe reached out for the papers the mysterious rider was handing him. Then, with a catch at his throat, he saw the great cloak whirl up—and seemingly blot the Ghost Rider from human sight! Now he was just a black nothingness on the white horse. His voice cried out, "*Up, Spectre! On!*"

And the marshal was left alone with his groaning, terrified prisoners.

The End.

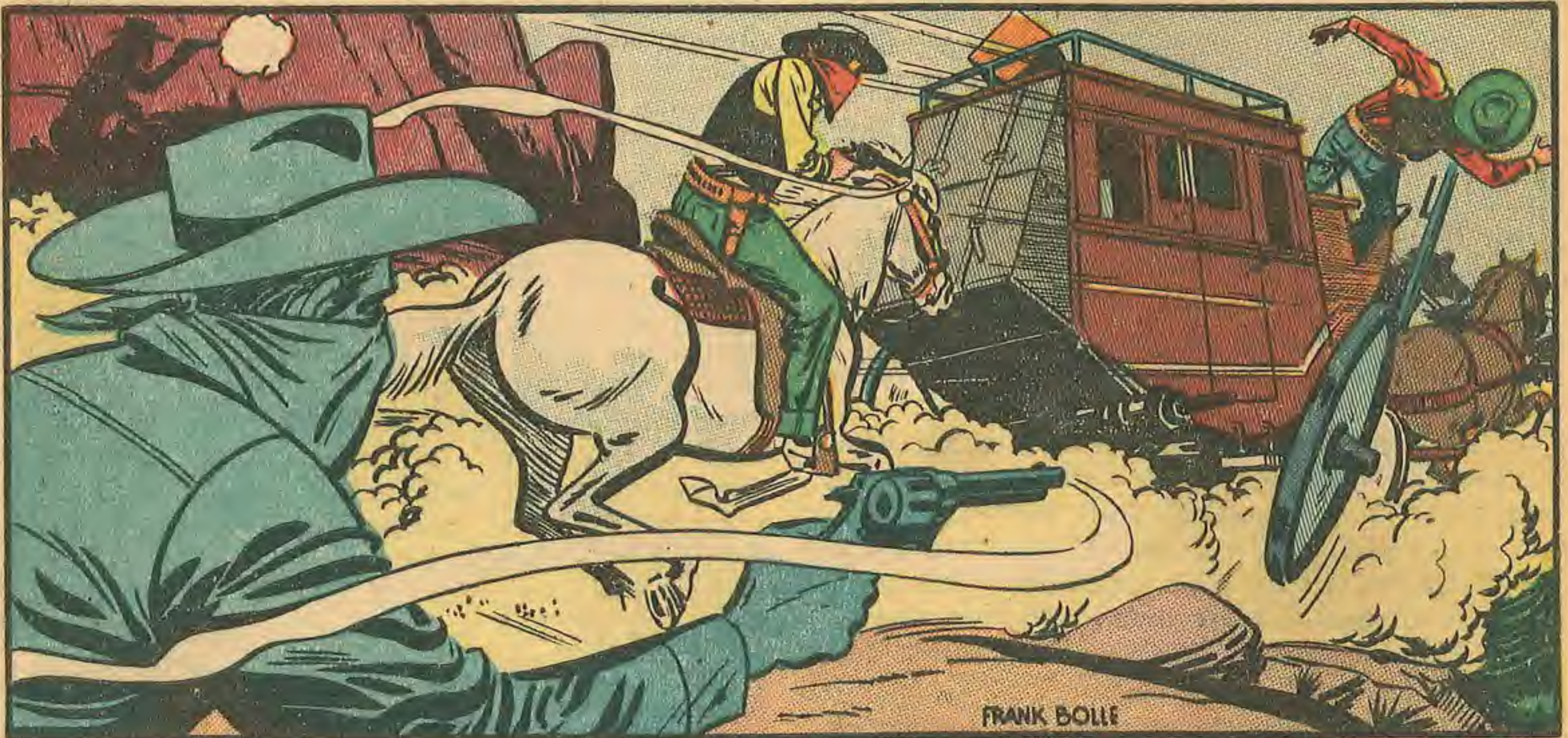
TIM HOLT

TIM HOLT



A CAREENING STAGECOACH BEGINS TO TOPPLE AS ITS FEAR-MADDENED HORSES BOLT WITH TERROR! SIXGUNS BLAST THE SILENCE OF THE MOUNTAIN PASS AS MASKED MEN THUNDER ALONGSIDE THE COACH! A GUARD SCREAMS AND FALLS! THE DRIVER LURCHES TO ONE SIDE....!

JUST ONE MORE ROBBERY OF THE WARPIPE STAGE...ONE MORE IN A SERIES OF HOLDUPS THAT CASTS A PALL OF FRIGHT ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE...THAT MAKES MEN SEE DANGER WHERE NONE EXISTS... AND INTO THIS FEAR-HAUNTED COW COUNTRY RIDE TIM HOLT AND CHITO... MARKED AS TWO MORE VICTIMS OF — **"PRAIRIE PANIC!"**



FRANK BOLLE

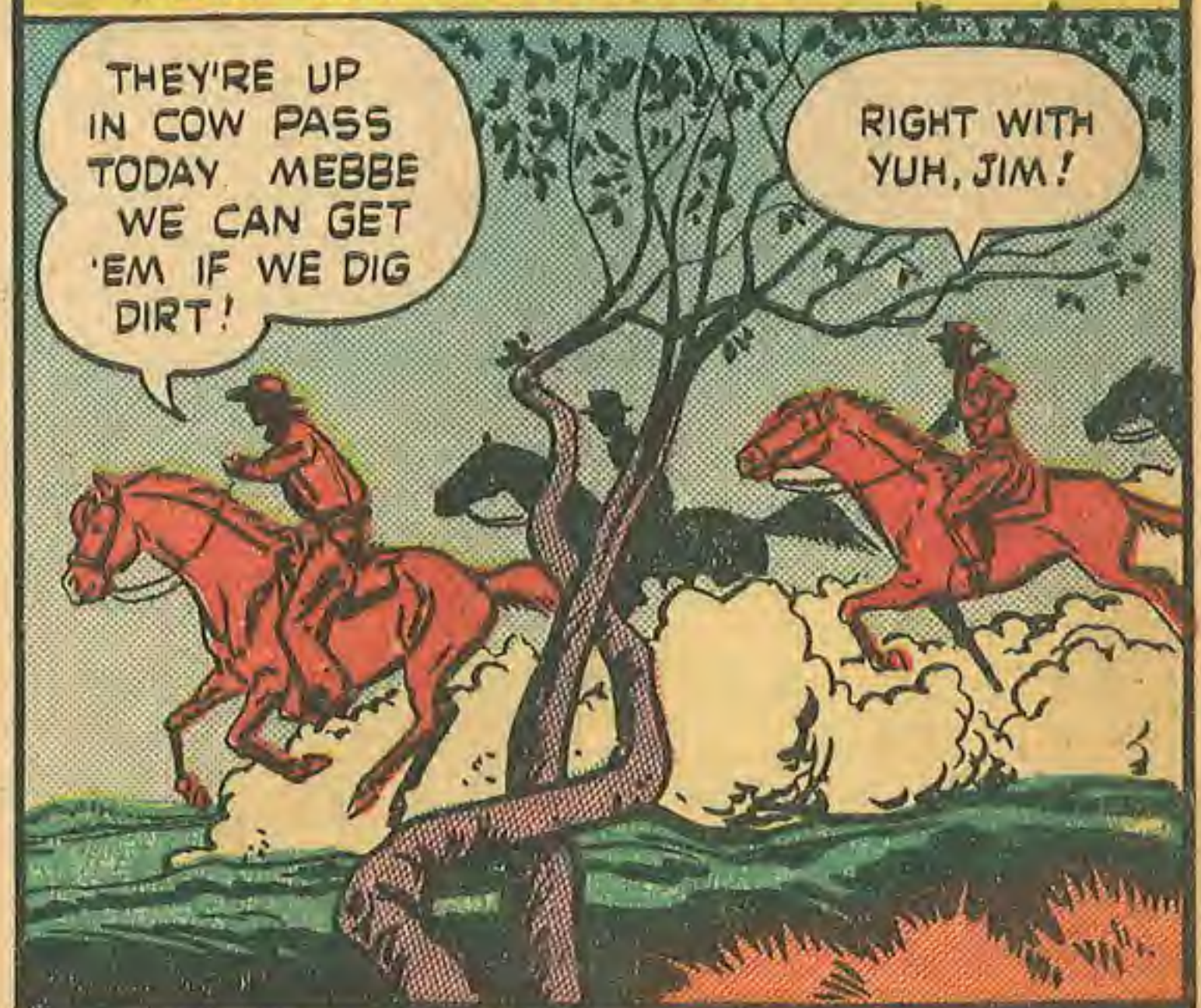
DAY AFTER DAY...ROBBERY AFTER ROBBERY... THE PANIC SWIRLED LIKE WILDFIRE THROUGHOUT WAR-PIPE VALLEY...



I GOT TH' HORSES!

I'LL GIVE YUH A HAND BY GRABBIN' THE REINS

ALERT EARS HEAR THE GUNSHOTS! HORSES ARE YANKED INTO MAD GALLOPS...



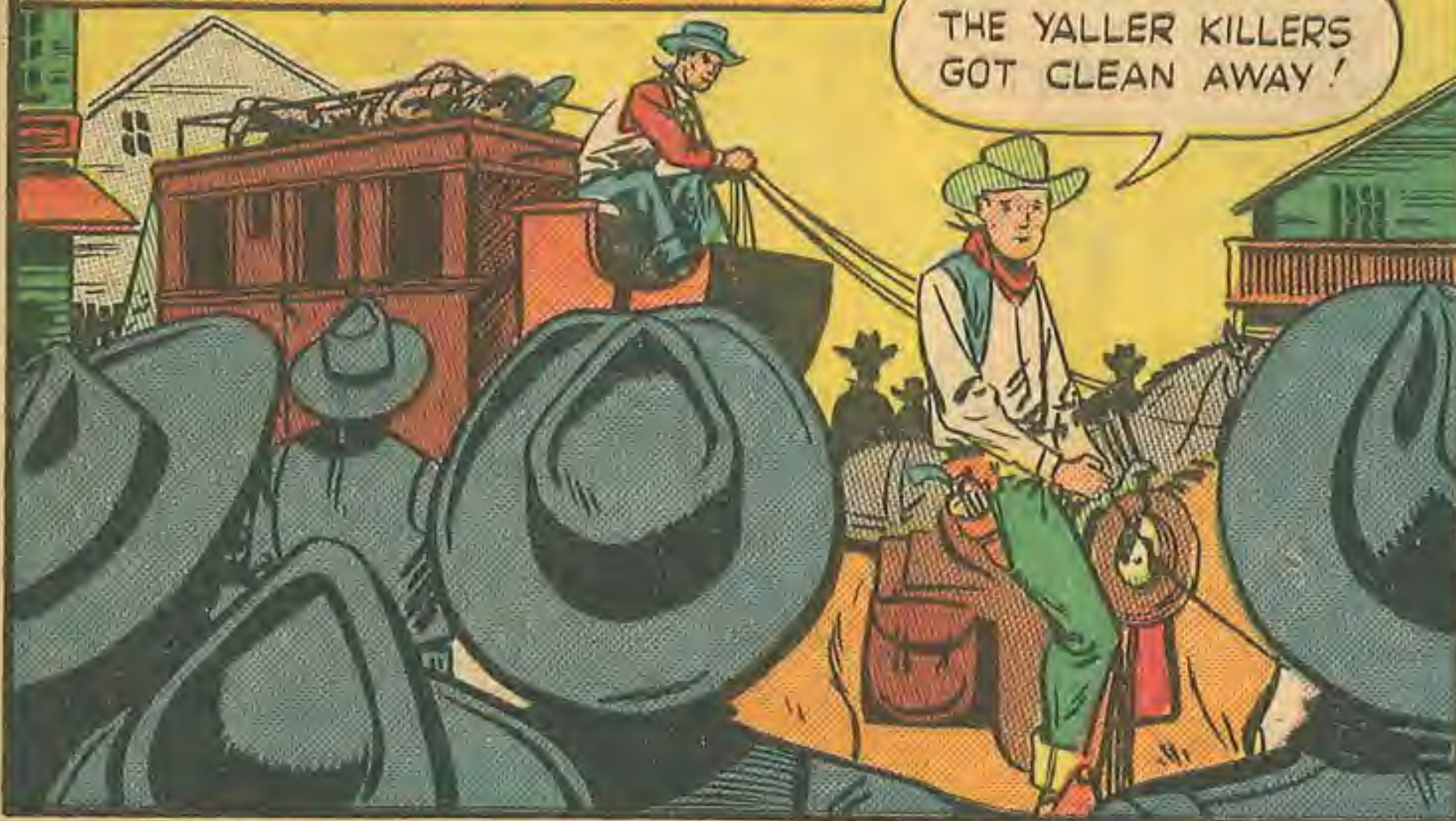
THEY'RE UP IN COW PASS TODAY MEBBE WE CAN GET 'EM IF WE DIG DIRT!

RIGHT WITH YUH, JIM!

TIM HOLT

G RIM-FACED MEN LINE THE BOARDWALKS OF WARPIPE AS STAGE AFTER STAGE COMES INTO TOWN, SOME WITH SHROUDED FORMS BETWEEN THE GRAB-RAILS...

THE YALLER KILLERS GOT CLEAN AWAY!



I NDIGNATION MEETINGS RESULT IN A SLOGAN FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE VALLEY...

**SHOOT FIRST!
ASK QUESTIONS LATER!**
ANYBODY THAT LOOKS
SUSPICIOUS - GETS
SHOT!

-ONLY
THING
TO
STOP
'EM!

GOOD IDEA!

...BEHIND
YUH, KEN!



S OME DAYS LATER, AS TIM HOLT AND CHITO RIDE TOWARD WARPIPE...

BELOW, CHITO -
STAGE
ROBBERY!



NO TIME TO GET DOWN
THE SAFE WAY! GOT TO
TAKE A CHANCE -!



- ON THE LARIAT'S
GRABBING THAT
SHRUB... AND
IT DID!

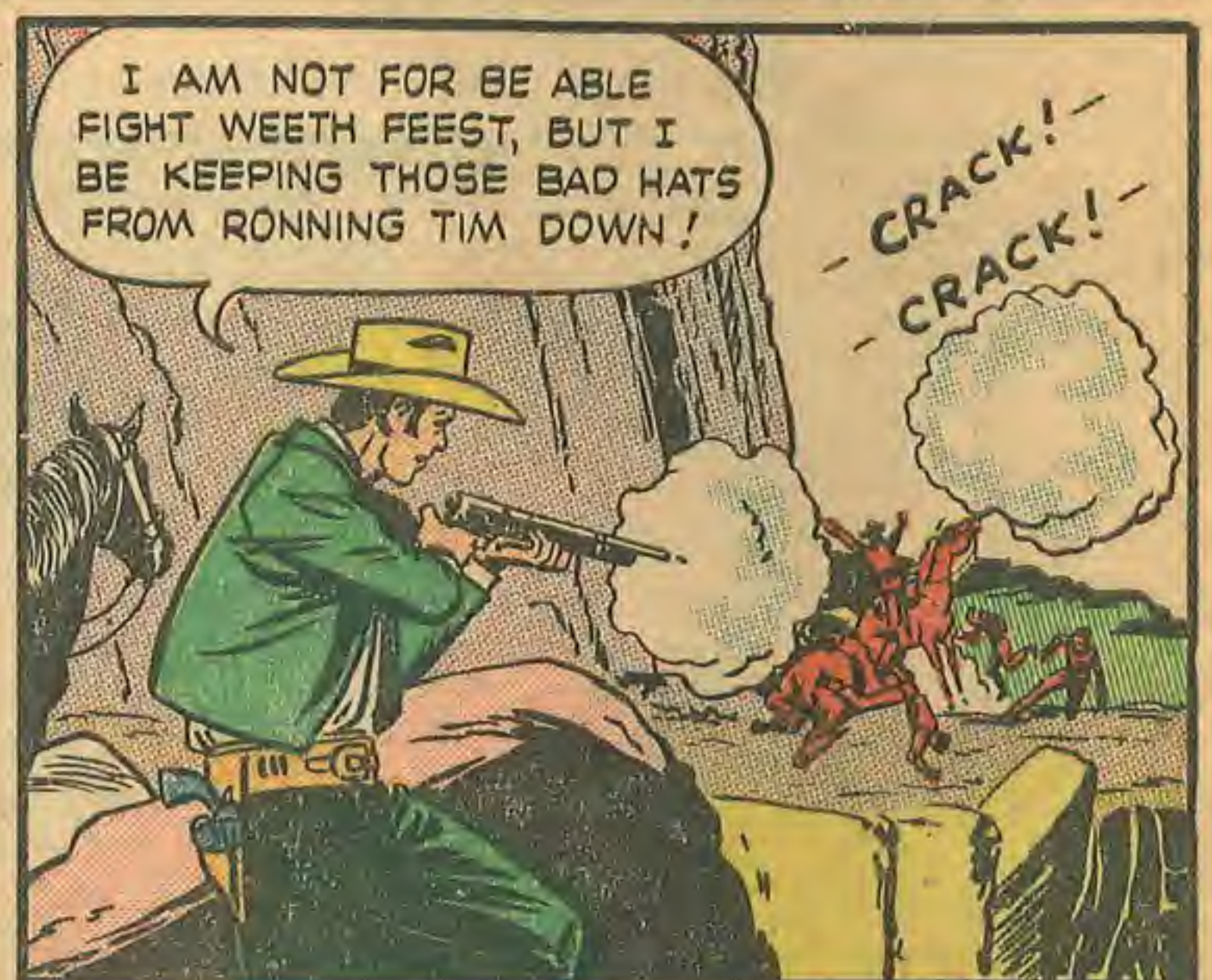
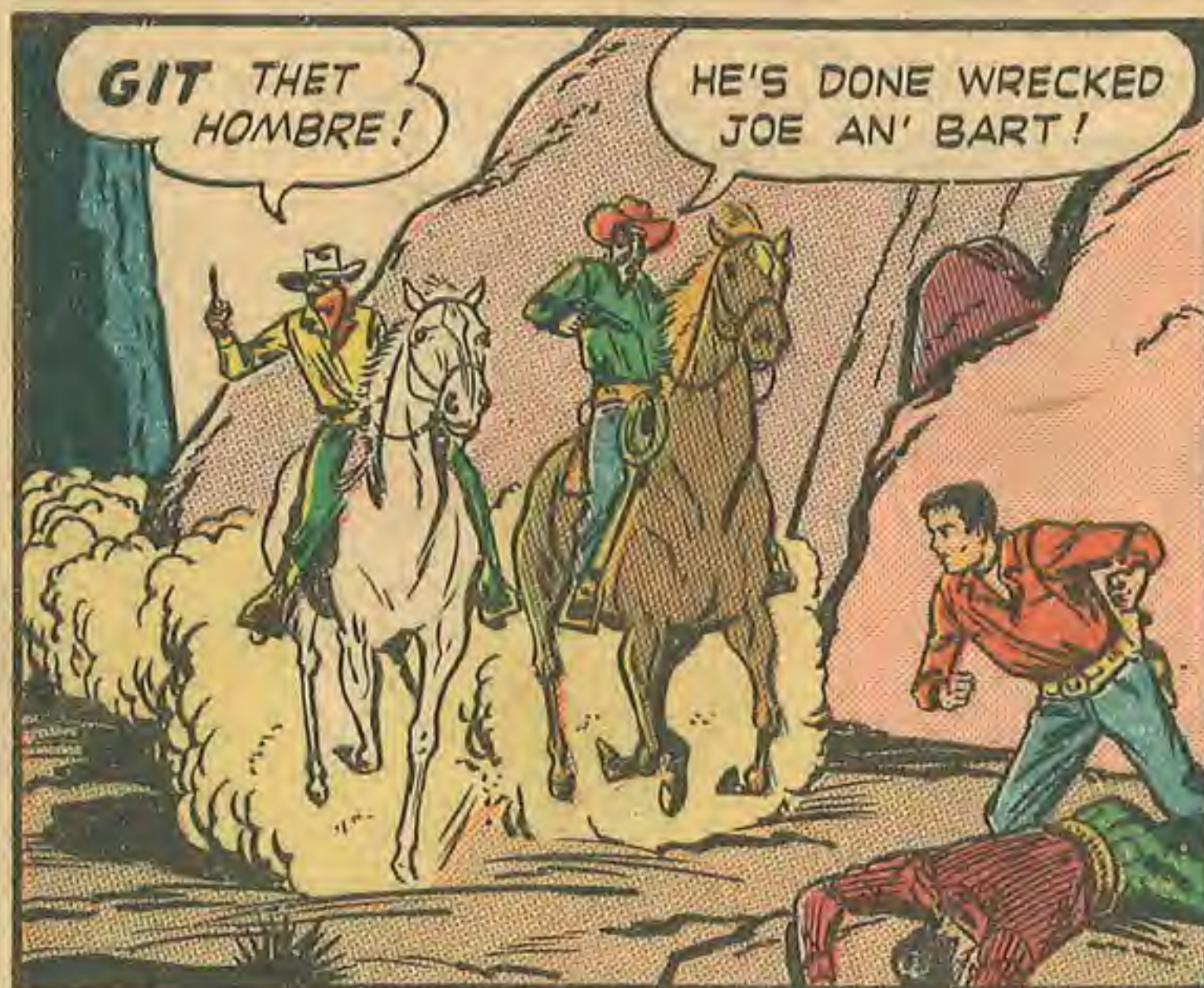


P LUMMETING DOWN-
WARDS AT TERRIFIC
SPEED, TIM LANDS WITH
THE FORCE OF AN
AVALANCHE!

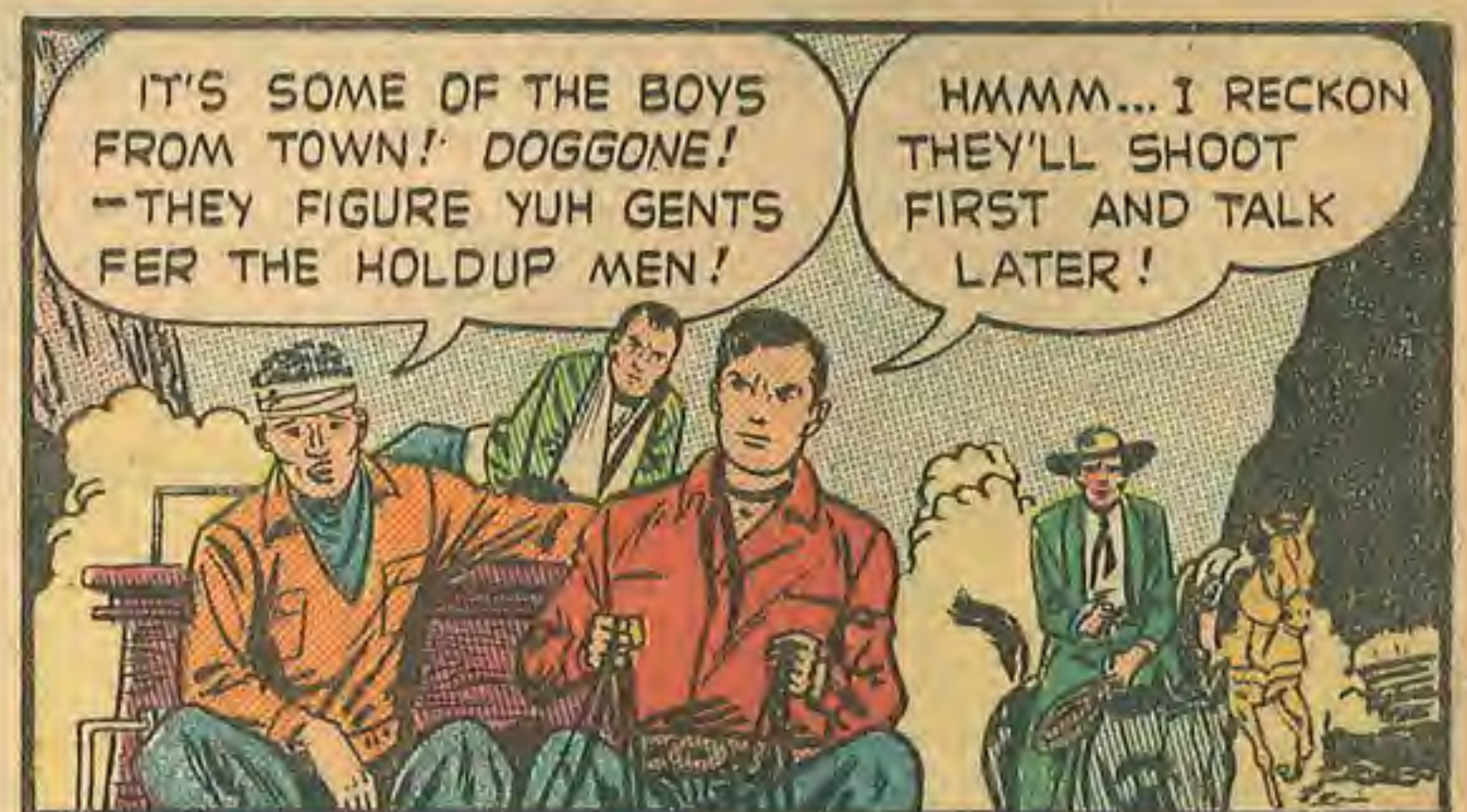
AAAAGGGHH!



TIM HOLT



SOME MINUTES LATER, AS TIM AND CHITO ARE BRINGING THE STAGE TOWARD WARPIPE, ANGRY SHOUTS AND THE BARK OF SIXGUNS SEND THE HORSES INTO A GALLOP...



TIM HOLT



TIM HOLT



IT'LL TAKE THEM HOURS TO GET DOWN HERE! NOW IF LIGHTNING WILL ANSWER TO MY WHISTLE...

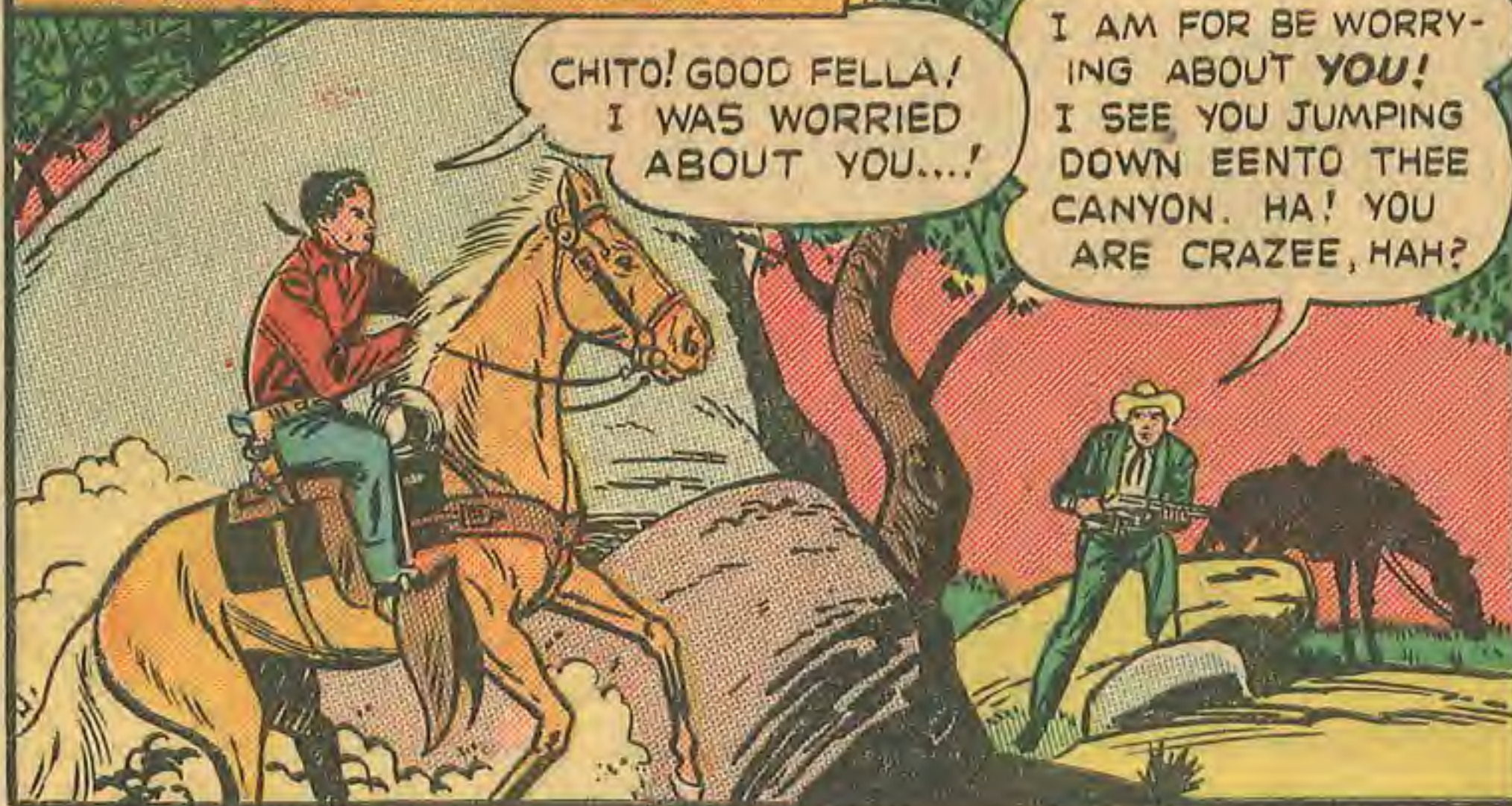


THERE HE IS! NOW TO LOOP MY ROPE AROUND THE SADDLE-HORN...



HOLD STEADY, BOY! THERE! THIS IS SLOW GOING...BUT IT WILL LAND ME ACROSS THE CANYON FROM THOSE HOMBRES...

AS DUSK SETTLES DOWN ACROSS THE CANYON COUNTRY, TIM REINS IN WITH A GLAD CRY...



CHITO! GOOD FELLA! I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU...!

I AM FOR BE WORRYING ABOUT YOU! I SEE YOU JUMPING DOWN EENTO THEE CANYON. HA! YOU ARE CRAZEE, HAH?



NOT CRAZY - BUT ALMOST. WE'RE **OUTLAWS**, CHITO! WE DAREN'T START A FIRE... GO INTO TOWN... TALK TO ANYBODY... EVEN LET OURSELVES BE SEEN!

EES ALL MEESTAKE! WHAT WE DOING NOW?



WE'RE GOING TO THE **ONE** PLACE WHERE THEIR POSSES WILL NEVER THINK OF FINDING US - THE **STAGECOACH RELAY STATION!**

HA! NOW I AM **KNOWING** YOU ARE LOCO! WHY EES CHITO GONZALES BUSTAMONTE RAFFERTY PICKING SOCH CRAZEE MAN FOR FRAN', HAH?

NEXT MORNING...



HUH? YOU GENTS! SAY! I'M MIGHTY SORRY 'BOUT WHAT HAPPENED. I YELLED TO THOSE RANNIES, BUT THEY NEVER PAID ME NO HEED!

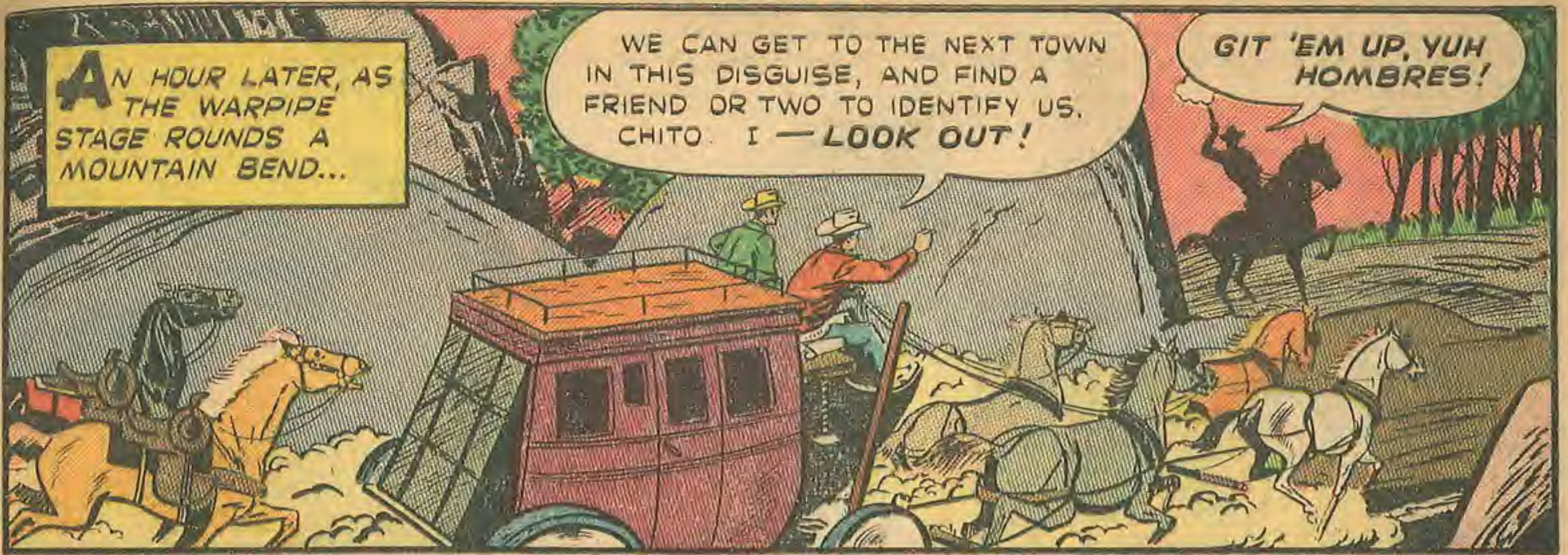
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, HOMBRE! YOU CAN MAKE IT UP TO US - BY LENDING US YOUR **STAGECOACH...**

TIM HOLT

AN HOUR LATER, AS THE WARPIPE STAGE ROUNDS A MOUNTAIN BEND...

WE CAN GET TO THE NEXT TOWN IN THIS DISGUISE, AND FIND A FRIEND OR TWO TO IDENTIFY US, CHITO. I — LOOK OUT!

GIT 'EM UP, YUH HOMBRES!



EES NO USE! HONEST MEN SHOOT US! OUTLAWS SHOOT US! EES TOO MOCH!



WITH THIS DIFFERENCE, CHITO — WE CAN SHOOT BACK AT THE OUTLAWS!



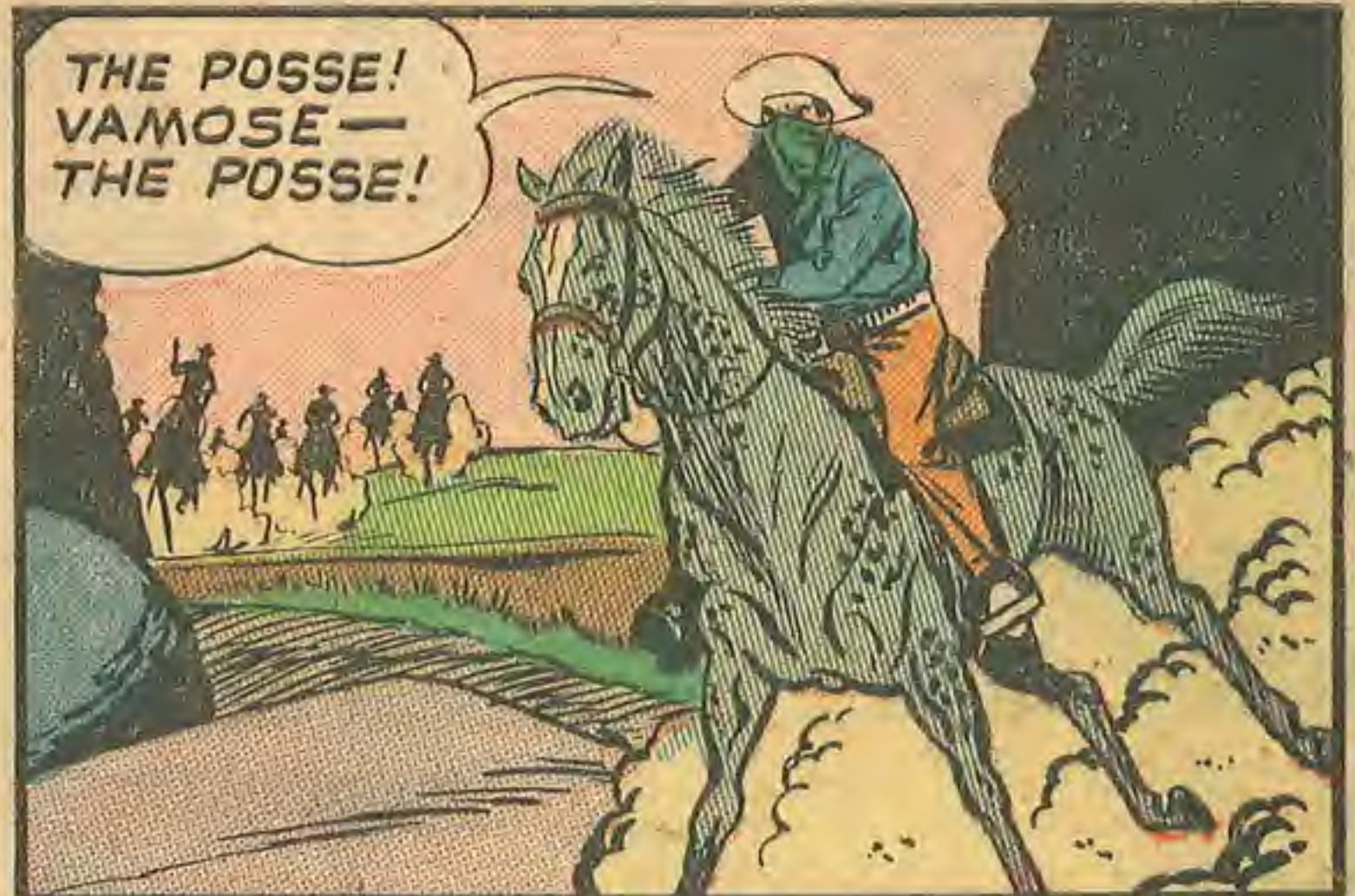
AS IF SHOT FROM CATAPULTS, TIM AND CHITO HURTLE INTO THE OUTLAWS! THE VERY FURY OF THEIR CHARGE SENDS THE GUNMEN REELING BACKWARD...

POUR IT TO THEM, CHITO!

I AM FOR GIVEENG THEM THE BUSINESS!



THE POSSE!
VAMOSE —
THE POSSE!



EES FINE THEENG! WE ARE BEING FIRING UPON BY BOTH BAD HATS AND THEE SHERIFF!

THEY SURE HAVE US CAUGHT IN A TRAP...



TIM HOLT



THEE POSSE EES FOR BE FALLING BACK! BUENO! GOOD!

NOT SO GOOD, CHITO! I WANT THEM TO FOLLOW US... WHILE WE FOLLOW THE OUTLAWS!



WE'VE RUN THEM TO EARTH— BUT WE CAN'T HOLD THEM HERE FOREVER! THERE'S JUST THE TWO OF US. IF THAT POSSE DOESN'T COME SOON...

I AM FOR SEEING WHAT YOU MEAN. IF THEY ARE NOT COME SOON, SHE 'VEEL BE TOO LATE — FOR US!



THE ENRAGED OUTLAWS TURN THE FULL FIRE OF THEIR WINCHESTERS AND COLTS ON THE PRAIRIELAND PARTNERS...

YEEE-WOW!
EES FOR BE HOT PLACE!



LET 'EM SHOOT! IT WILL KEEP THEM BUSY...UNTIL I CAN SPREAD OUT THIS GUNPOWDER... AND SET FIRE TO IT!



THE HOT, DRY GRASSES BURST INTO VOLCANIC FURY AS A THICK RED FLAME LEAPS UP AND ALL AROUND...

THE WIND IS BLOWING RIGHT AT THE CABIN! THEY'LL HAVE TO COME OUT OR BE ROASTED!



THE FIRE'S CUT OFF THEIR ESCAPE FROM THE FRONT! THAT REAR WINDOW IS THEIR ONLY CHANCE!...YOU—HOMBRE! TOSS OUT YOUR SHELLBELT FIRST— THAT'S IT!

HA! WE ARE MAKE THEM DISARMING BEFORE WE BE LET THEM OUT!



SOME HOURS LATER, IN WARPIPE...

TIM HOLT! WELL, DOGGONE, NO WONDER ME AND THE BOYS COULDN'T CATCH YUH. HUH! I'M MIGHTY SORRY 'BOUT THET, HOLT— BUT I SURE AM GLAD YUH GOT THOSE OWLHOOTS FER US! NOW MEBBE ME AN' THE REST O' THIS RANGE KIN GIT SOME SLEEP O' NIGHTS...!

THE END

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**DURANGO
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